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A

PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON THE

BOOK OF PSALMS,

(The Prayer-Book Version,)

CHIEFLY FOUNDED ON THE FATHERS.

VOLUME II.,

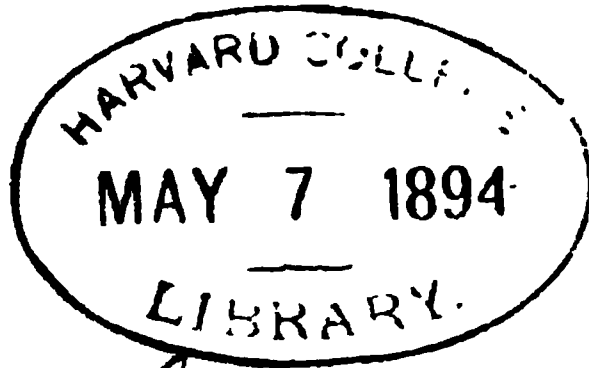
CONTAINING PSALMS LXXIII.—CL.

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*W. S. Appleton,
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INTRODUCTION II.

§ 1. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PSALMS.

It is, of course, clear that the meaning which all who read the Psalms, as well as other portions of Holy Scriptures, have first to look to, is that of the words taken in their plain and literal sense. We certainly can make no great progress in the study of God's Word until we have understood its Literal meaning. In the historical books this is generally very plain; but in the poetical and prophetical portions of the Bible it is much more difficult to discover it, because the writers intended that it should be so. It was one of the great points of ancient learning, as it is of modern,—

“To understand a proverb and the interpretation,
The words of the wise, and their dark sayings.”

As has been said already, it was one of the beauties of Hebrew and of all Eastern poetry to hide and wrap up its meaning; and this was done occasionally by difficulty of language and obscurity of expression. Therefore it is not always easy to understand the literal meaning of a Psalm,—as, for instance, that o

many verses of Psalm lxviii.; and a careful study of it in the original language, and in the Greek and other translations, is required to arrive at even a partial knowledge of what the words which the Psalmist wrote really mean. We must always, therefore, look first to the Literal meaning.

The second meaning which the reader of the Psalms is required carefully to attend to, is the Prophetic meaning. Many of the Psalms contain clear prophecies and distinct revelations made by the Holy Ghost of things that were to come to pass, especially of the Lord Jesus Christ, of Judas, and of the calling of the Gentiles into the Church. The prophecies of the Psalms on these things are several times expressly said to have been fulfilled in the New Testament itself; and often, as in Psalm xxii., they are so distinct and positive, that it is impossible to mistake them even wilfully. In all cases where the New Testament declares any part of a Psalm to be prophetic, we have an infallible comment on the prophecy which silences all other guesses or explanations. And besides those prophecies which are infallibly pointed out to us, there are also others which are not so directly pointed out, but which yet are distinctly prophetic of the Saviour. He said unto the Apostles when He revealed Himself to them in the upper room, 'These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me.' And then 'opened He their understanding, that they

might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem^a.’ Therefore, wherever passages occur which describe in an evident manner some fact of our Lord’s life, either in His humility or His exaltation, and particularly when such a passage occurs in a Psalm which the New Testament has already pointed out to us as containing prophecies of Him, as in Psalm lxix., then we must take these parts of the Psalms to be prophecies, and must understand them in their prophetic meaning.

A third meaning is the Moral meaning. By this we apply to ourselves, to our own consciences, our own conduct, or our own feelings, the devotional or penitential expressions of the Psalms; we draw lessons of holiness, or purity, or love, from the words of the prophets and men of God; or we read the denunciations of rebuke, of indignation, and of coming punishment, which David made against Doeg, or Saul, or Ahithophel, as having an equal reference to the cruel and the tyrannical, to the deceitful and the hypocritical at this time. It is the moral sense of Holy Scripture which furnishes matter to the Church for practical sermons and exhortations on the dealings of God with man both in the outer and the inner life, and which sets before the consciences of Christians the histories and narratives recorded in

^a St. Luke xxiv. 44—47.

the Bible, as 'profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.' The drawing out and dwelling upon the moral meaning in the Psalms must of necessity be in some measure left to each man's own experience and spiritual insight into the righteous ways of God in dealing with the soul, and sustaining by grace the inner life of man.

The last method of interpretation is that of discovering the Mystical or Spiritual meaning of Scripture; and this is the most difficult to lay down rules for. It is very probable that a mystical meaning was almost always in the mind of the writers of the Psalms, and that if it is allowable to spiritualize any portion of the Scripture, it is allowable to do so in interpreting these holy songs. It is likely, too, that it is the duty of the student who regards the Psalms in a mere critical light, to trace out the mystical meanings as a part of his critical work, no less than it is the privilege of the Christian to do so, who reads them in a Christian spirit. Very much of early poetry was mystical: it was doubtless connected in its origin with the hieroglyphic writing, in which each outward sign had an inward meaning, and the birds and beasts, and the members of the human body expressed different qualities, virtues, passions, or other abstract ideas. With those who were used to this painting of conceptions of the mind under the form of visible objects, the objects themselves would come to have but a secondary rank in the scale of meanings: the light of the sun, the rage of the lion, the moisture of the cloud,

would suggest, or rather represent, other things,—wisdom, or violence, or the diffusion of benefits. A language would in this way be formed, founded on the symbolism of nature. And the recollection of the divinely ordered types of the Jewish law, which the soul enlightened by the Holy Spirit knew to be types, and dwelt upon as upon shadows of more perfect forms, would confirm, and indeed would hallow, this peculiar habit of poetic conception and expression. This love of symbolism would harmonize also in a wonderful way with the parallelistic structure of Hebrew poetry, in which one thing was ever being set against the other, and would lead men to see, or to seek for, an inner meaning in everything in heaven above and in earth beneath. This seems clearly indicated by parts of the 103rd Psalm, in which the thing seen is not only used as a type of, but as an argument for, the thing unseen. Be this as it may, it is certain that the Saints and Fathers of the early Church always dwelt much upon the spiritual sense of the Psalms; and if it be true that a poet can best understand a poet, it must be still more true that a saint can best understand a prophet. In reading the Psalms, we cannot but gain great profit to our souls by following reverently in their footsteps.

They seem to have possessed some traditional key to the spiritual meaning of the Psalms, for while some go further than others in spiritualizing them, there is a wonderful agreement among them in the results of their interpretation: but the real secret of

their insight into the spiritual meanings of Scripture, or at least the secret of their drawing from that storehouse such multitudes of holy and beautiful thoughts and images, was their spirit of Divine love. They saw their Lord everywhere. St. Augustine can say of a Psalm in which we can scarcely trace out anything which may be considered as an allusion to the Gospel scheme, — ‘This Psalm breathes wholly of Christ.’ It did so to him: he saw his Lord there, because he could see Him; for his eyes were enlightened by the graces of faith and love.

By this constant reference of the Psalms to Christ, and to the Church as inseparably united to Christ, their words become invested with a new and brighter meaning. The words of David become the words of the Son of David, — speaking either in His own person, or in the person of His Church and people. This, then, is the first rule of spiritual interpretation, — to see Christ everywhere, to find His life, His words, His glory, underlying all the prayers and praises of all the Psalms. In following this rule, we may err on the side of carrying the spiritual interpretation too far; yet surely it is better to err with St. Augustine and St. Bernard, than to be wise with the cold and unspiritual critics of these latter days. There is, however, a mean which we must aim at in this, as in other things; for when a medieval writer would interpret, ‘Then shall the earth bring forth her increase,’ not of the general resurrection, but of the Blessed Virgin bringing forth the Lord, we cannot but think it rather a beautiful fancy than

a correct comment. Probably the safest course for an English Churchman, is to take those Psalms as having a direct reference to the Saviour, which the Church has marked with that sacramental character, by appointing them for those holy days on which she commemorates His Birth, His Passion, His Resurrection, and His Ascension. In these we may seek for our Lord, and trust most surely to find Him, because His Church has told us that He is there. In the other Psalms we may hear Him speaking in His people,—praying, mourning, hoping, rejoicing in them; but in these we can joyfully acknowledge Him as speaking in His own Person.

The second rule of spiritual interpretation consists in attaching a new and inner meaning to certain expressions and images. Thus the feet are mystically interpreted to be the affections with which we run to Christ, the bones are fortitude and strength of resolution, mountains are angels and heavenly powers, the sun is the Lord of glory, the moon is the Church, the stars are the Saints, the heavens are the Scriptures, the clouds are mysteries, sheep are the people of Christ's Church, and oxen her ministers, the singing a Psalm is the leading a holy life, the ten-stringed lute is the decalogue, the lion is the devil, the young ravens the heathen; and so of all the objects and images which occur in the Psalms. In the same way, the history of the Israelitish Church is considered to be allegorical of that of the Christian Church,—the tyranny of Pharaoh is the tyranny of sin, the Red Sea is holy Baptism,

the wilderness is the scene of earthly temptation, the ark is the human nature of Christ, the manna is the Holy Eucharist, the rest of Canaan is the rest of Christ's kingdom, Sion is the Church on earth, and Jerusalem the Church in heaven. This method of interpreting is founded on Scripture. St. Paul uses it in his Epistles, and declares authoritatively that portions of the history of the Old Testament are an allegory^b. And the use of it is not only sanctioned by the inspired writers of the New Testament; but it was also intended to be so used by the writers of the Psalms themselves. One of the Fathers has remarked very rightly on those opening words of Psalm lxxviii.,—

“I will open my mouth in a parable,
I will declare hard sentences of old,”—

that after the prophet had made this declaration, one would think that his discourse would be filled with obscurities and with enigmatic sayings, but that, on the contrary, all through the Psalm there is nothing but what is most simple, and easy to be understood by everyone,—it being a short history of the Israelites before they became a kingdom. The Psalmist, therefore, could only have spoken of these events as being ‘parables and hard sayings,’ because the things which were so easily understood in their historical meaning contained within themselves, in their mystical meaning, truths of mighty and wonderful importance. The light of the Holy Ghost was needed, as the Psalmist saw, to elucidate these

^b Gal. iv. 24.

marvellous obscurities, and to explain how in these holy parables were hid the sacraments of the New Covenant.

Therefore we can only conclude that the spiritual and mystical meanings, which the Fathers dwell so much on, are not to be neglected or treated with indifference, though they may not at once approve themselves to minds which have been trained in another school; but that each Christian man, according to the gift given to him, must follow as he can in this sacred path of interpretation. There is room in the Divine writings for all; like the manna, they miraculously adapt themselves to each one's needs and each one's powers. The spiritual interpretations of the Fathers are not authoritative; they aim but to be edifying: and if in reading the Psalms we do follow closely those who closely followed Christ, we may still feel secure that, while we do so, we shall not stray far from the right and true way.

§ 2. THE TRANSLATIONS OF THE PSALMS.

THE Psalms were, of course, composed and written in Hebrew, the native language of the writers; and their Hebrew text, as we now have it, represents certainly in almost every case the sentiments and words of the inspired poets. It is possible that here and there a line or a word may have dropped out in the long course of transcribing,—as verse 14 in Psalm cxlv. has done,—or may have been erased by the Jews,

as bearing too clear a testimony to the Messiahship of our Lord: as the Fathers asserted that the words of verse 10 of Psalm xcvi. originally were,—

“Announce it to the Gentiles
That the Lord hath reigned from the tree.”

but that the words ‘from the tree’ were intentionally omitted by the Jews from their manuscripts. But even supposing that one or two such omissions may possibly have been made, yet, upon the whole, we are sure the original text of the Psalms is undoubtedly preserved to us; and that the Psalms, as well as the rest of the Canon of Scripture, are in the same state as when they were finally revised by Ezra and his assistants, ‘the men of the Great Synagogue,’ among whom Rabbinical tradition reckons Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and Nehemiah.

By Ezra and the Great Synagogue, the ancient form of the Hebrew letters, which were the same as those of the Samaritan, were changed for the square and handsome characters which the Jews now use, and which were borrowed from the Assyrian; and in his time the custom began of reading the Scriptures to the people in the synagogues in Hebrew, and afterwards translating it into Chaldee; for the common people after the return from the captivity had lost the use of their ancient language, or at least only understood it very imperfectly, and spoke and understood Chaldee in their ordinary conversation. The Scribes, therefore, in the synagogues ‘read in the book of the law distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading;’ that is

to say, they used to read the Law of Moses, and doubtless also the Prophets and the Psalms, in Hebrew; they then gave the sense of it by translating it orally into Chaldee, and afterwards made them understand it by comments and expositions, generally of a traditionary character. These Chaldee translations, or paraphrases, were in later times committed to writing, and are called by the name of Targums. The Hebrew text being in the first instance without the vowel-points, the interpretation of it must have been in many cases traditional; but at some period after the Christian Era the Masorites affixed the vowel-points to the whole Bible, and by doing so determined the sense of such passages in the Psalms and other books as before were doubtful.

About the year 286 B.C., when the number of Jews who had settled in Egypt had become very great, a translation was made of the whole of the Old Testament into Greek. These Jews had lost the knowledge of Hebrew even more completely than the Jews of Palestine, and therefore a translation of Scripture was much required for their use. The history of this translation is involved in obscurity. The account which is usually given is as follows:—that the librarian of Ptolemy Philadelphus, the king of Egypt, called the attention of his sovereign to the importance of the Jewish sacred writings, and to the desirableness of enriching the magnificent library which existed at Alexandria with a translation of the Law and the other Scriptures; that upon this King Ptolemy sent the librarian, whose name was

Aristeas, on a special embassy to Eleazar the high-priest, the brother and successor of Simon the Just, at Jerusalem, — desiring him to send certain of the scribes, learned men of Israel, to translate the Scriptures, that they might be added to his library. Seventy-two scribes, of whom six, according to some accounts, were chosen out of each tribe, were sent into Egypt, and there translated the Law of Moses in the space of seventy-two days. Many marvellous features were added to this story in after-times; one of them being, that each one of the interpreters was shut up in a separate cell, and translated the whole Scripture, and that on their versions being compared at the end of their labours, they were all found to be exactly alike word for word. It appears, however, certain that the Law of Moses was translated into Greek by seventy-two scribes, or Rabbis, in Egypt, during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, from which circumstance this version has always had the name of the Septuagint, the Seventy, or the LXX.; and that the Prophets, Psalms, and historical books were translated by the same scribes, or by others of equal learning, at the same time, or very shortly after, either at the king's request, or for the use of the Jews in Egypt and other foreign countries. The Septuagint translation, though lamented as an evil by the Hebrew Rabbis, soon acquired great popularity. It was received and used in the public service of those synagogues in all parts of the world which were frequented by the Jews who did not understand Chaldee, and who were therefore called Hellenistic,

or Grecizing Jews; and by the time of our Lord it was received and quoted, if we may judge from the example of the Evangelists and Apostles, as of nearly equal authority with the Hebrew original.

After the establishment of the Church of the New Covenant, the translation of the LXX. came into universal use among the Christians who spoke Greek: it was read in the churches, and the comments of all the Greek Fathers are made upon this version; while in the western parts of the world a translation was made from the LXX. at a very early period, which was known by the name of 'the Ancient Italic' Version. This translation was used by the Latin Fathers before the time of St. Jerome: but St. Jerome, having acquired a knowledge of Hebrew, made with great care and industry a new translation of the whole Bible, which, though based in some degree upon 'the Ancient Italic,' yet was far more correct. This, with some few variations, constitutes what is now called 'the Vulgate,' and is the authorized version of the Churches under the obedience of Rome. But of the Psalms, St. Jerome made two translations: the first he prepared at Rome, under the directions of Pope Damasus; it was little more than a correction of the Italic version already existing. This has still the name of the Roman or Italic Psalter. The second translation was made by him afterwards in Palestine, and is that which is contained in the Vulgate. Of these two Psalters, the Roman was very long in use in the western part of the Church, but it gradually gave way to the second version, which, from being

first used in Gaul, was called the Gallican; and at length was only used in that part of Italy which is immediately in the neighbourhood of Rome. At present its use is confined to some few churches in Rome and at Milan: everywhere else in the Latin Church, except perhaps occasionally in Spain, the Gallican version of the Psalms is used.

In the English Church, also, we possess two Psalters: the one being that in the Prayer-book, which is used in the daily Offices of the Church; the other being the one in the authorized translation of the whole Bible. The preface to the Prayer-book tells us ‘that the Psalter followeth the division of the Hebrews,’—that is, that the Psalms are numbered as they are in the Hebrew Bible, and not according to the LXX, and the Vulgate,—‘and the translation of the great English Bible set forth and used in the time of King Henry VIII. and Edward VI.’ This Psalter, which we use in our daily prayers, is taken from the Bible which was printed in London in 1539, under the authority of Archbishop Cranmer and Bishop Coverdale: it was ordered to be used in churches, and from its size was usually called ‘the Great Bible.’ This translation was made by comparing the Vulgate and the Hebrew, or rather by correcting the Vulgate by the Hebrew; and it is most justly esteemed for its majestic grandeur, its musical flow of style, and its being admirably adapted for chanting. For these reasons, it was always preserved when the other portions of Scripture in the Prayer-book were made to conform to the authorized ver-

sion. Though this version is not rendered quite so accurately from the Hebrew as the Bible version, yet it gives the sense upon the whole with equal correctness; and though it contains a few obsolete words,—for instance, ‘runagates,’ in Psalm lxviii. 6, which is an old form of ‘renegades;’ ‘leasing,’ meaning ‘lies,’ in Psalm v. 6; and ‘wink,’ in Psalm xxxv. 19, which is used in the sense of closing the eyes demurely and hypocritically,—together with some expressions which we now consider homely, yet, upon the whole, it has become so dear to the affections of English Churchmen, that it would be impossible now that it should be changed. It has been truly said that the three noblest versions of the Psalter in existence are St. Jerome’s Latin version, Luther’s German version, and last in order of time, though not in merit or in beauty, the version of our English Prayer-book.

§ 3. THE USE OF THE PSALMS IN DIVINE WORSHIP.

It is clear from the Psalms themselves, as well as from many passages in the books of Kings, of Chronicles, and of Ezra and Nehemiah, that the chanting of the Psalms formed a part of the solemn Service and worship of God in the tabernacle on Mount Sion, and in the temple built by Solomon on Moriah. The titles of many of the Psalms, which describe them to have been composed ‘for the chief musician,’ or ‘the leader of the choir,’ prove that they were from the first intended for the service of the temple. ‘In the days of David and Asaph of old there were

chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God^c.’ David with great care and judgment, and with the help of the priests, and of the Levites^d, regulated the manner in which the ark was to be brought to Mount Sion, and also gave them the Psalms to be chanted on the occasion, and afterwards fixed the order in which the Services were to be performed in the new Tabernacle. In doing this, he certainly only restored and enlarged upon the original order which he had learned from Samuel^e, and which had remained traditionally from the time of Moses. Solomon in the temple preserved the same order of divine service and of Psalmody which David his father has arranged; and Hezekiah, when he, in his pious reformation of religion, ‘commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David and Asaph the Seer^f,’ did no more than restore the form of festival-worship which had become neglected and disused. Nehemiah and Ezra, after the return from the captivity, followed in the same course. They did not institute any new order of public worship, but set the Levites ‘to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David, the man of God^g.’ That the Psalter formed the whole, or a great part, of the liturgy of the Church of Israel is very probable, though we have no positive tradition, and indeed but a few scattered notices, as to the mode in which its various portions were used. It is

^c Neh. xii. 46.

^d See 1 Chron. xv., xvi., xxiii.—xxv.

^e 1 Chron. ix. 22.

^f 2 Chron. xxix. 30.

^g Neh. xii. 24.

said, however, that the Jews used constantly and ordinarily Ps. xxiv. on the first day of the week; xlviii. on the second; lxxxii. on the third; xciv. on the fourth; lxxxvi. on the fifth; xciii. on the sixth; xcii. on the seventh.

The care with which the Psalter was preserved in the sacred canon, and the reverence with which it was regarded, prove that it was no mere collection of popular or striking poems. The Israelites had such, which contained praises of their heroes, and the histories of their mighty deeds, like the Book of Jasher^h; they had also poems embodying the wisdom of science and the knowledge of nature, as the verses of Solomon on natural historyⁱ, but these have all perished. They served their turn in the education of the people, and were lost: but the Book of Psalms remains, through the will and decree of God, as an inheritance of the Church of the elect for all times.

The Christian Church received this inheritance from the Jewish. The example of the Saviour, Who sang with His disciples the Psalms of 'the Great Hallel,' on the night when the commemorative Pass-over gave place for ever to the Eucharistic Sacrament, became a law to the whole Church, and His Apostles closely followed the practice of their Lord. Paul and Silas, when they said their form of midnight prayer, sang Psalms to God aloud^k, probably the very Psalms which they had always been used to sing at that time of prayer. The same St. Paul bids the Churches both of Ephesus and of Colosse to use

^h Josh. x. 13; 2 Sam. i. 18. ⁱ 1 Kings iv. 32, 33. ^k Acts xvi. 25.

Psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs¹, singing them melodiously and heartily, and, as the original would seem to imply, in alternate verses, unto God. St. James, too, bids the man who is glad of heart to shew his gladness by singing Psalms^m. The use of the Psalter, therefore, as the appointed form of Christian devotion, spread with the spreading of the Church, east and west.

The worship of the Christian Church has from the beginning divided itself into two great branches,—I., the performing that Service which especially is called the Liturgy, the centre and crowning act of which is the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist; and II., the use of hourly or daily prayers, the centre or chief part of which is the recitation of the Psalms. Psalms mixed with readings or lessons from Holy Scripture, and with prayers, have always been the staple of the daily Service of the members of Christ's Church in all ages. They have been differently arranged in different Churches, but the general plan has been always the same.

In Egypt, for instance, in early times, after some variations, the number of the Psalms for the morning and evening was fixed at twelve, which were sung one after the other, without any lessons being read between them. In Armenia, more than ninety Psalms are still said at a single service.

In the Eastern or Greek Church, the Psalms are divided into twenty portions of similar lengths called 'Cathismata,' of which three or more are recited on

¹ Eph. v. 18, 19; Col. iii. 16.

^m St. James v. 13.

each day throughout the year,—two being generally said through at morning prayer, and one at even-song; but this number at certain solemn seasons is doubled, and through part of Holy-week and Easter-week, no Psalms are said at all. Each one of these is again divided into three ‘staseis,’ or stations, at the end of each of which the *Gloria Patri* is chanted. But in addition to the ‘Cathismata,’ other Psalms chosen for the purpose are used continually in the offices of the Greek Church.

In the Western Church, an arrangement was made at an early period, by which the Psalms were divided into seven portions for the seven days of the week, and each of them was again divided according to the seven hours of devotion, that is, Nocturns and Lauds, which together were called Matins, Prime, Tierce, Sext, Nones, Vespers, and Compline. The Psalms were thus said through once every week; and this arrangement of them, intermixed with collects, hymns, and short selections from Scripture, and from the Fathers, form what is called the Breviary Service in the Latin Church.

But, practically, these portions of the Psalms, after the fervour of the early Church had passed away, were not duly recited at the seven hours which their names denote; but a few of them were said altogether in the morning and in the evening. The divines who reformed the English Prayer-book complained that ‘notwithstanding that the ancient Fathers divided the Psalms into seven portions, whereof every one was called a Nocturn, now of late times a

few have been daily said, and the rest utterly omitted ;' and therefore the Church of England, when she remodelled her Services, arranged them into two Offices only,—Matins, and Evensong; the services of the Nocturns, Lauds, and Prime being comprehended in Matins, and Vespers and Compline in Evensong. She also diminished the number of the Psalms which were to be said daily, by ordaining that the Psalter should be said through once in each month, in the regular order of the Psalms. For the great festivals she appoints proper Psalms, having a reference to the day. The American Church has followed her example in the morning and evening services, but has deviated in one important point, that is, in allowing that selections from the Psalms may be said at discretion, in the stead of the portion which comes in for the day in the regular order of the Psalms.

§ 4. THE CHANTING THE PSALMS.

It is clear, beyond all dispute, that the Psalms were originally intended by their inspired authors to be sung to music. They declare this themselves again and again; and the titles also often indicate the particular instruments to which they were to be sung. David himself appointed the choirs of Levites, invented new instruments of music, and gave great attention to the proper chanting of the Psalms in the tabernacle:—

“ In all his works he praised the Holy One
The most High with words of glory ;

With his whole heart he sung songs,
And loved Him that made him.
He set singers also before the altar,
That by their voices they might make sweet melody,
And daily sing praises in their songs.
He beautified their feasts,
And set in order the solemn times until the end,
That they might praise His holy Name,
And that the temple might sound from morning."

Ecclus. xlvii. 8—10.

We cannot with positive certainty discover what was the nature of the tunes or chants to which the Psalms in the temple were sung. Some have supposed them to be of an elaborate character, like our modern anthems. It is more probable that they were simple, grand, and solemn, very like, if not identical with, what we now call the Gregorian tones; and that they consisted of but few notes, to which the verses were recited, with a change at the end. The accents affixed by the Masorites to the Psalms seem to indicate some such method of chanting; and the chants, or cantillations, which the Jews still use in their worship, are probably a traditional imitation, though much degenerated, of the ancient temple choral song. The Psalms were probably sung by the choirs of Levites, accompanied by the instrumental music of their brother Levites, the people or the priests occasionally joining, or responding, as the Psalm required. This supposition will account for the change of persons which so often occurs in the Psalms. The Jews most likely used the same kind of chanting in reciting the Psalms in their private or family devotions, as was used in the temple.

As the Christians inherited the Psalms from the Jewish Church, they would probably retain also the tunes to which they were sung. The most ancient method of singing the Psalms in the Christian Church, was for the whole congregation to sing together. But this custom was afterwards departed from. In Egypt, one person sang the Psalm through with a plain and even voice, the rest sitting by in silence, and attending to what was sung; at the end of all, after the antiphone, which was always one of the Alleluia Psalms, the whole assembly joined in chanting the *Gloria Patri*. The practice of singing the Psalms by two choirs, chanting them verse by verse alternately, began at Antioch, about the middle of the fourth century: St. Chrysostom encouraged this method of chanting at Constantinople, where it became exceedingly popular; and St. Ambrose introduced it into the Western Church. St. Basil, speaking of the Eastern custom in his time, says,—‘Dividing ourselves into two bands, or choirs, we sing antiphonally one with another; but sometimes we permit one alone to begin the Psalm, and the rest of the congregation join in at the close of every verse.’ St. Hilary describes ‘the glorious sound of the Christian hymns, and the respondings of the congregation.’ But it was always the aim of the Church to check any tendency to too florid or worldly music, and the old traditional style of simple chanting was as far as possible preserved. St. Augustine tells us in his Confessions, that St. Athanasius took great pains to regulate the music of the Church,

‘and introduced the custom of singing Psalms in plain song, ordering the reader to pronounce them with such inflections, that it was nearer to reading than to singing:’ but this, probably, was when one person chanted them alone to the congregation. In the sixth century, St. Gregory gave great attention to the subject of chanting, and having arranged the ancient melodies which had been used in the Church from the time of St. Ambrose, he added others to them, making up the number of eight, which tones have ever since been in use in the Church, under the name of ‘the Gregorian tones.’ They were retained in our own Church at the Reformation, under the direction of Archbishop Cranmer, and were generally used in our cathedrals, and also in parish churches, until the end of the seventeenth century. Chants, as time went on, were composed in imitation of them, but aiming rather at variety and sweetness than the grandeur and holy severity of the ancient Church music; and these by degrees superseded the early plain song. It is not unlikely that this prevalence of music which seeks rather to be beautiful than to be holy, may have had somewhat to do with the banishment of chanted Psalms from our churches. When music becomes too worldly, it untunes men’s minds from devotion, rather than raises them to it, and sustains them in it. From this cause, however, or from mere negligence, the practice of chanting the Psalms to the ancient tones of the Church was, until of late years, fast becoming obsolete; and the Psalms themselves, which are only rightly used when they

are rightly chanted, were too much disregarded as a means of devotion and prayer.

It is clear that the Psalter should be always sung when it is used for the worship of God. The reading it when it is part of the service, and then singing rhyming translations in addition to the service, are miserable substitutes for the full glory of the inspired Psalms, chanted by Christian mouths to the old melodies of the Christian Church, from the fullness of Christian hearts, glowing with the rapture of praise and the joy of thanksgiving.

Truly the due saying and chanting of the Psalms is a noble and a holy thing!—‘A thing,’ as judicious Hooker has truly saidⁿ, ‘which all Christian Churches in the world have received; a thing which so many ages have held; a thing which the most approved councils and laws have so oftentimes ratified; a thing which was never found to have any inconvenience in it; a thing which, heretofore, the best men and wisest governors of God’s people did think they never could commend enough; a thing which, as Basil was persuaded, did both strengthen the meditation of those holy words which were uttered in that sort, and serve also to make attentive, and to raise up the hearts of men; a thing whereunto God’s people of old did resort with hope and thirst, that thereby especially their souls might be edified; a thing which filleth the mind with comfort and heavenly delight, stirreth up flagrant desires and affections. correspondent unto that which the

ⁿ See Ecc. Pol. V. xxxix. 4.

words contain, allayeth all kinds of base and earthly cogitations, banisheth and driveth away those evil and secret suggestions which our invisible enemy is always apt to minister, watereth the heart to the end it may fructify, maketh the virtuous in trouble full of magnanimity and courage, serveth as a much-approved remedy against all doleful and heavy accidents which befall men in this present life ; to conclude, so fitly accordeth with the Apostle's own exhortation, "Speak to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, making melody, and singing to the Lord in your hearts," that surely there is more cause to fear lest the want thereof be a maim, than the use a blemish, to the Service of God.'

§ 5. THE GLORIA PATRI.

THE Prayer-book in prescribing the order in which the Psalter is to be read, directs that 'at the end of every Psalm, and of every part of the cxixth Psalm, shall be repeated this hymn :—

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son : and to the Holy Ghost ;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.'

This short ascription of glory to the blessed Trinity is of very great antiquity, and has always been used in the Christian Church in connection with the Psalms. The Church of England has acted with discretion in making it her only antiphone, or anthem. The antiphone was a short sentence, or verse of Scripture, which was chanted in earlier ages after every verse,

but in later times after each Psalm, or portion of the Psalms, and it varied according to the nature of the festival, and assigned a peculiar character to the Psalm appropriate to the time. Thus the antiphone which followed Psalm i. would shew whether its meaning for the time was to refer to a saint, to a martyr, or to our Lord Himself; and so with other Psalms. The use of these antiphones had, in process of time, become confused, and they rendered the services difficult and intricate; and, therefore, at the reforming of the Prayer-book they were all left out, and the *Gloria Patri* alone was retained. This gives to every Psalm a Christian meaning, and makes every Psalm as we sing it a Christian hymn; while it teaches the members of the Church that the praise and glory which was imperfect in the Jewish Church, is made perfect in the Church of Christ, by the full revelation which the Son of God has made to man of the Father, of Himself, and of the Holy Ghost.

THE THIRD DIVISION OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

PSALMS LXXIII.—LXXXIX.

THIS third Book of the Psalms may be well supposed to have been compiled, like the preceding one, during the reign of Hezekiah, and under his directions. It comprehends seventeen Psalms or Hymns, of which eleven are the composition of the Psalmists of the name of Asaph, four are by the sons of Korah, one is entitled 'A Prayer of David,' and the last is 'An Instruction of Ethan the Ezrahite.' It is closed by the words—

'Blessed be the Lord for evermore.
Amen, and Amen.'

The Psalms in this book differ much in their style and in their subjects. Some—as, for instance, the seventy-fifth and seventy-sixth—refer particularly to the danger which hung over Jerusalem at the time of the Assyrian invasion, or are expressions of hearty thanks for that marvellous deliverance from it which God granted to the prayers of Hezekiah and his people. The seventy-eighth and eighty-first appear to be festival Psalms, appointed, it is probable, to be used in the celebration of the Passover, and the Feast of Trumpets or of Pentecost. The Psalms in this book have generally a national character, and bear the marks of having been composed for the public service of the temple, either in times when

the nation was in peril from its enemies, or in those seasons when the solemn rites of religion, the temple sacrifices, and the due observance of the Law of Moses were interfered with or proscribed by the idolatry and the tyranny of the kings of Judah.

During the reign of Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, not only was the worship of God in the temple neglected and despised, but altars of idols were erected in every city of Judah, and even within the hallowed precincts of the temple. The sanctuary itself, it would appear, was at that time not only despoiled of its riches and polluted, but it was also wantonly injured by fire and other means of destruction, while they who continued faithful to their God were persecuted. This Isaiah evidently implies, (Isa. lxiii. 8,) where he laments:—

‘The people of Thy holiness have possessed it but a little while:

Our adversaries have trodden down Thy sanctuary.’

And again, (lxiv. 11.)

‘Our holy and our beautiful house,

Where our fathers praised Thee,

Is burned up with fire:

And all our pleasant things are laid waste.’

And this impiety and idolatry was also accompanied by war, and distress, and slaughter; for the speech of Hezekiah to the people, in his first attempt at a reformation and return to the worship of God, shews that they had suffered very severely. He said, ‘For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this. (2 Chron. xxix. 9.)

It is therefore to this period that these mournful Psalms, the seventy-fourth, the seventy-ninth, and the eightieth, are to be referred. Some have assigned them to the period of the captivity at Babylon; and other modern commentators, with some show of argument, to the times of the Maccabees and the invasion of Jerusalem by Nicanor: but the desolations made by Ahaz, there is little doubt, gave occasion for their being made, while the Psalmist's mind did not rest merely in the contemplation of the present distress, but was carried by the Spirit of prophecy into futurity to see and to tell of those other desolations both of Nebuchadnezzar and of Antiochus which were coming upon Jerusalem, and of that last fearful and woeful destruction by the armies of Rome, which has left Jerusalem to be trodden down of the Gentiles even until now.

THE THIRD DIVISION.

Ebening Prayer.

PSALM lxxiii. *Quam bonus Israel!*

1. TRULY God is loving unto Israel : even unto such as are of a clean heart.

It is most certain and most true that our God is full of love and goodness to His people,—that is, to them whose spirits are holy, and the thoughts of whose hearts are pure. This is indeed most true.

2. Nevertheless, my feet were almost gone : my treadings had well-nigh slipt.

3. And why? I was grieved at the wicked : I do also see the ungodly in such prosperity.

Yet in us dim-sighted beings faith is needed, even that we may see clearly the lovingness of God to His own. We all are tempted, as Asaph was, to trust to sight; and while we so trust we are in great danger of straying from the truth; we are likely to fall into very fatal error. We see the wicked prospering, and faring, to all appearance, very happily; and that sight stirs up in us envy, and jealousy, and grief.

4. For they are in no peril of death : but are lusty and strong.

5. They come in no misfortune like other folk : neither are they plagued like other men.

6. And this is the cause that they are so holden with pride : and overwhelmed with cruelty.

Heb. Pride decks them as with a collar ;
Violence covers them as a robe.

We have heard that death is the punishment of sin. But there are many whom we see sinning wilfully and openly, who seem very far off from death, who are in the full possession of health and strength, and who seem to 'come to their grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.' We have heard that there is vengeance for the ungodly. But these men seem to have fewer misfortunes than others, the ordinary sorrows and troubles of life seem to keep away from them ; so that pride seems to them a fit and becoming ornament, and they wrap themselves up in their own arrogance and cruelty.

7. Their eyes swell with fatness : and they do even what they lust.

8. They corrupt other, and speak of wicked blasphemy : their talking is against the most High.

9. For they stretch forth their mouth unto the heaven : and their tongue goeth through the world.

10. Therefore fall the people unto them : and thereout suck they no small advantage.

11. Tush, say they, how should God per-

ceive it : is there knowledge in the most High ?

Greediness and self-indulgence, the coveting eye and the pampered flesh, go together with them. They own no rule of conduct but their own wicked pleasure. Their conversation is utterly vile, corrupting men, and blaspheming God. What they say themselves they wish to have taken as if said from heaven ; and their wicked and unbridled tongue is active in giving vent to their opinions everywhere. And so they get admirers and flatterers. They induce others to leave the right way and to turn after them ; for they seem to have a full draught of good fortune, and to drain it to the very dregs. And as for their evil and unjust doings, they affirm in the intoxication of selfishness, that God will never notice them ; they deny Him to be the Governor of the world, and set Him at defiance altogether.

12. Lo, these are the ungodly, these prosper in the world, and these have riches in possession : and I said, Then have I cleansed my heart in vain, and washed mine hands in innocency.

13. All the day long have I been punished : and chastened every morning.

It is indeed a hard trial to faith to watch the prospering of the wicked. The tempter is ready with the temptation. If the wicked can so er

joy life, and if the riches and advantages of the world are so thoroughly possessed by them, of what avail is it to keep the heart from evil thoughts and the hands from evil acts? To strive after purity and innocence would be but lost labour: and self-examination, and self-chastisement, and patient submission under the dispensations of Providence, are in that case all of no account, and utterly in vain.

14. Yea, and I had almost said even as they : but lo, then I should have condemned the generation of Thy children.

If we take notice of the present condition only of evil-doers and blasphemers, and look no further, certainly there is no small temptation to think that they are right, and to speak and act as they do. But yet to do so is to condemn all those who are living another and a higher life, of folly. There are always in the world some who walk in piety and holiness, as becomes the children of God; and to follow the wicked and impious is not merely to forsake these, but to cast a reproach upon them. He that is not with Christ and His people is against them.

15. Then thought I to understand this : but it was too hard for me,

16. Until I went into the sanctuary of God : then understood I the end of these men ;

17. Namely, how Thou dost set them in

slippery places : and castest them down, and destroyest them.

It is indeed a difficult question for the natural man to answer—how should it be that the wicked should prosper and succeed, while they who are obedient suffer? It is in the providence of the All-wise that it should be so, or else it would not be : but very much pondering on our part will not make the reason of it clear. It is something beyond us, and requires more than human experience and more than natural wisdom to search it out. We must collect our thoughts, and leaving behind us this world and its doings, we must go into the house of God, into the more immediate presence of the Almighty, and say to Him, ‘That which I see not teach Thou me.’ There, in the solemn quietness of holiness and of prayer, there will come the answer to that question which has so deeply perplexed us ; there shall we see the end of these men. Our thoughts will be called off from their enjoyments, and their riches, and their self-will, and their reckless course of life, to consider the end of all these. There we shall enter into the hidden reasons of the dealings of God with His creatures. We, in the light of our own understandings, look but at a part ; in the light of God’s grace we see the whole. The very things which grieved us in these men—their prosperity and wealth—were their dangers, and became their punishment. They talk against the Most High, and that very talk is that which in God’s all-wise providence destroys them.

18. Oh, how suddenly do they consume : perish, and come to a fearful end !

19. Yea, even like as a dream when one awaketh : so shalt Thou make their image to vanish out of the city.

Heb. Like the dream of one awakening,

Thus, O Lord, Thou makest their vain show contemptible in the city.

How dreadful will not their awaking be ! how fearful is their end ! Their advantages have but increased their supineness and security, and so made their destruction more terrible when it came. All the things they had trusted in and boasted in must go away from them like a dream, when one is startled from his slumber. They will be left in an instant, miserable, and blind, and naked. They will vanish from this earthly scene, from the sight of the citizens of God's Church, like the fancies of a vision, and be seen here no more ; and they will awake up after their own evil likeness in that eternal ruin and despair which they have by their guilt made ready for themselves.

20. Thus my heart was grieved : and it went even through my reins.

21. So foolish was I, and ignorant : even as it were a beast before Thee.

Contemplated thus in the silence of the sanctuary, and by the light of God's holiness, how miserable and even terrible is the life of the ungodly, and how blind and ignorant, and more reasonless than the

beasts that perish, must he be who would call such men happy, and would envy them their ill-used wealth or power! Such a feeling is a most pitiable yielding to the animal portion of our nature. The stain of such envious grief needs to be washed away in the grief of deep repentance for indulging it, and in tears of shame for the ignorance which gave rise to it.

22. Nevertheless, I am alway by Thee : for Thou hast holden me by my right hand.

23. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel : and after that receive me with glory.

This thought must indeed pierce us to the heart—that all through our impatience, our envy, and our ignorance, God, in Christ, was with us, holding us up that we might not fall, leading us by the hand that we might not miss our way;—was with us in His birth, that He might make our nature clean; in His passion, that He might save us from our sins; in His death, that He might give us life; in His ascension, as our Forerunner in heaven; in His seat at the right hand, as our Advocate; in His coming again as our immortal King. He Who has left the wicked to themselves in slippery places, guides the pure in heart with His spirit of counsel, and after this life receives them into eternal glory.

24. Whom have I in heaven but Thee : and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee.

25. My flesh and my heart faileth : but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

What is it to prosper in the world and to have riches in possession, if it be compared with the attaining unto the sight of God in heaven ! The pure in heart shall see God, and what is there upon earth to desire in comparison with that infinite blessing ! Our flesh may suffer, our heart may fail when sorrow, and trouble, and death, come upon us ; but though weak in ourselves, we are strong in the mighty love of God ; though poor in ourselves, we are rich in the portion of His everlasting joy.

26. For lo, they that forsake Thee shall perish : Thou hast destroyed all them that commit fornication against Thee.

27. But it is good for me to hold me fast by God, to put my trust in the Lord God : and to speak of all Thy works in the gates of the daughter of Sion.

To forsake God is to perish. To indulge 'an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God,' is to be self-destroyed. Every soul that gives itself to fleshly lusts, and joins itself to earthly idols, divorces itself from its true and only Lord. As the Israelites were destroyed who joined themselves to Baal-peor, and were led into sin by the women of Midian, so shall the unchaste and the corrupt ever be destroyed. But there is but one true good ; and

if we attain to that good, we have all good. The one good is God. 'There is none good but One, that is, God.' What more can we have than Him, what better thing can we do than hold Him fast, what wiser thing than trust in Him? And having Him and being His, we shall no longer doubt or fear evil, but shall be talking of His goodness, and grace, and righteousness, within His holy Church.

This Psalm was written by Asaph. The design of it was to prove to the unthinking that God is truly loving to His own people. This truth which the first verse asserts is the key to the whole Psalm. The writer had seen the wicked enjoying earthly prosperity, and it had seemed wrong to him that they who lived evil lives should have the advantages of wealth and power, while the God-fearing were often suffering, and were always under restraint. This reflection had weakened his faith, but by grace he at length arrived at a right understanding of the ways of providence; and to instruct others in what he had been taught himself, he composed this Psalm.

PSALM lxxiv. *Ut quid, Deus.*

1. O God, wherefore art Thou absent from us so long : why is Thy wrath so hot against the sheep of Thy pasture ?

2. O think upon Thy congregation : whom Thou hast purchased, and redeemed of old.

3. Think upon the tribe of Thine inheritance : and mount Sion, wherein Thou hast dwelt.

Churches have their trials, even as individual souls have theirs. The Church of Israel had to suffer and to mourn at different times, sometimes through the violence and cruelty of heathen enemies, some

times through the unbelief and wickedness of Israel themselves. So too the Church of Christ has suffered persecution again and again ; at one time from the powers of the earth openly raging against her, at another from them who have been her own children, but have become faithless, and have added open violence to neglect and unbelief. In all these trials the Church must look to God, and not to man ; she must implore His pity, and seek to appease His anger, and not look to the compassion or caprice of man. It is because they have displeased Him, because He is angry with His sheep and leaves them, that these things come upon them. They must turn to Him, and so will He turn to them. They must plead before Him the redemption which Christ wrought, and the inheritance which He gained for us, Who once took our nature and dwelt in our world, yea, still abides in His Church and will abide unto the end.

4. Lift up Thy feet, that Thou mayest utterly destroy every enemy : which hath done evil in Thy sanctuary.

Heb. Raise Thy feet unto the places lastingly desolate :

The enemy has destroyed all things in Thy sanctuary.

LXX. Lift up Thy hands upon their haughtiness at the end.

5. Thine adversaries roar in the midst of Thy congregations : and set up their banners for tokens.

His people must humbly pray that He will arise and come to see what evil has been done, what

desolation has been wrought in His Holy Place. The ruin that Ahaz brought upon the Temple by his idolatry, is but a type of the ruin that sin, and false doctrine, and 'covetousness, which is idolatry,' will always bring upon the Church. 'Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the Lord; and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem.' He also erected an altar in the very front of the temple of Jerusalem, and there chanted the praises of false gods, and set up the banners of the idols of Damascus, 'according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel.'

6. He that hewed timber afore out of the thick trees : was known to bring it to an excellent work.

Heb. They are like men bringing up axes
Into a thick forest.

7. But now they break down all the carved work thereof : with axes and hammers.

The wicked are like fellers going into a forest with axes, not to cut down wood for use or ornament, but merely to destroy and to make havoc. They mar the beauty of God's Church, they break down its carved work and take away all its glory. So did Ahaz when 'he took the silver and gold which was found in the house of the Lord, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria.' Yet this desolation was but a warning and a prophecy to the

nation of Judah, of the greater loss and deeper punishment their sins were preparing for them.

8. They have set fire upon Thy holy places : and have defiled the dwelling-place of Thy Name, even unto the ground.

9. Yea, they said in their hearts, Let us make havock of them altogether : thus have they burnt up all the houses of God in the land.

For by the Chaldæans and Nebuchadnezzar, and again by the Romans under Titus, that was done to the Temple of which all foregoing desolations had been a warning and a prophecy. ‘Their beautiful and holy house, where their fathers praised God, was burned with fire,’ even to the ground. Beautiful and holy as it was, there was not left one stone upon another which was not thrown down. But the covetousness and idolatry of Israel had defiled the Temple before the flames consumed it. Therefore Nebuchadnezzar carried away Judah captive to Babylon, and the Romans strove utterly to destroy the nation of the Jews ; therefore they cast down their altars and burned with fire their holy places. They had ‘defiled the temple of God,’ and ‘God destroyed them.’ It is when the Church is polluted with sin, that her enemies are allowed to say, ‘Let us make havoc of her altogether.’

10. We see not our tokens, there is not

one prophet more : no, not one is there among us, that understandeth any more.

The tokens of God's presence were at last removed from Judah : the succession of her prophets was cut off. There were prophets in the reign of Ahaz, —Hosea, and Micah, and Isaiah ; there were prophets at the fall of Jerusalem and in the captivity in Babylon,—Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and Daniel. But in that last and most utter desolation, they had rejected the one great Prophet and His message, and no other prophet was sent to them ; they sought after a sign, but no sign was vouchsafed but the one which they had not heeded, and would not heed. Then indeed 'the law perished from the priest, and counsel from the ancients.'

11. O God, how long shall the adversary do this dishonour : how long shall the enemy blaspheme Thy Name, for ever ?

12. Why withdrawest Thou Thy hand : why pluckest Thou not Thy right hand out of Thy bosom to consume the enemy ?

The delay of God to help them in their former trials had been short, but in their last punishment it was to be long indeed. Then their adversaries dishonoured them, and their enemies blasphemed God ; but in the rejection of the Christ they had dishonoured themselves, and they themselves became the enemies of God, when they blasphemed Him Whom He had sent. Therefore they waited in vain

for God to lift His hand, and to deliver them. For the Son of God, 'the arm of the Lord,' Who now sitteth on His right hand, and Who came forth from the bosom of the Father into the world, they refused to receive for their Deliverer and their Saviour.

13. For God is my King of old : the help that is done upon earth He doeth it Himself.

14. Thou didst divide the sea through Thy power : Thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.

15. Thou smotest the heads of Leviathan in pieces : and gavest him to be meat for the people in the wilderness.

Yet our God, though He has punished and will punish sin, is a merciful and gracious King ; all salvation, and grace, and goodness that is in the earth, is of Him and from Him. He was the Deliverer of Israel when He divided the Red Sea, and led them through on dry land, when He bade the waters return and swallow up Pharaoh and all his captains and his mighty men. He smote down and crushed him, as a hunter smites down the ravening crocodile. And the dead bodies of the Egyptians, once so strong and proud, were cast upon the sea-shore for a prey to the wild beasts that peopled the wilderness of Arabia.

16. Thou broughtest out fountains and waters out of the hard rocks : Thou driedst up mighty waters.

And when the children of Israel thirsted in the wilderness, He bade Moses smite the rock and the waters gushed out for them to drink, and followed them in their journeying. When they came to Jordan the river was divided before them, and their armies marched through its empty bed into the land of Canaan. The water came at His bidding, and disappeared at His command. These things did He of old, and His past goodness is a promise of His future mercy.

17. The day is Thine, and the night is Thine : Thou hast prepared the light and the sun.

18. Thou hast set all the borders of the earth : Thou hast made summer and winter.

Yea, God is the Maker and the Lord of all. The light of day and the darkness of night are alike His, and open before Him. He spake in the beginning, 'Let there be light, and there was light.' He made the sun to rule the day, and to give light upon the earth. He appointed the bounds of the earth, and separated the sea from the dry land ; He gave each portion of the world its climate, and its own peculiar varieties of seasons, the warmth of summer and the cold of winter.

19. Remember this, O Lord, how the enemy hath rebuked : and how the foolish people hath blasphemed Thy Name.

20. O deliver not the soul of Thy turtle-

dove unto the multitude of the enemies : and forget not the congregation of the poor for ever.

21. Look upon the covenant : for all the earth is full of darkness, and cruel habitations.

Therefore may His Church pray to Him Who is the Fount of all goodness, to remember that the blasphemy and stubbornness of her persecutors is a wrong done against His holiness ; and may humbly ask that she, who is among them as a mournful and yet faithful and harmless dove surrounded by fierce birds of prey, may not be given into their talons ; and that the poor and helpless may not be for ever forsaken and forgotten by their Lord. She may implore Him to remember that covenant which is higher and holier than the first covenant, and which was ratified in the blood of Jesus. For while He turns away His face from the rainbow of the second covenant, the earth becomes dark with the clouds of sin, and all her dwellings are filled with a flood of cruelty and violence.

22. O let not the simple go away ashamed : but let the poor and needy give praise unto Thy Name.

Without His grace and help the oppressed and the humble are left defenceless and ashamed ; with His grace the poor and the dejected are made rich and strong in faith ; and they can return praise to Him for His goodness with a thankful heart.

23. Arise, O God, maintain Thine own cause : remember how the foolish man blasphemeth Thee daily.

24. Forget not the voice of Thine enemies : the presumption of them that hate Thee increaseth ever more and more.

The cause of God's people is the cause of God. They cry to Him, therefore, to arise and sit upon His judgment-throne; and in the mightiness of His power to bring all the blasphemies of His enemies which they have so often repeated, and the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him, to the condemnation which they deserve. His patience but increases the presumption of the wicked; when He has ceased to be patient and has determined to be just, they who have resisted Him will perish before Him.

This Psalm is "a Maschil, or Instruction of Asaph." There are many opinions as to the time in which it was composed, and the events to which it refers. The desolations of the reign of Ahaz, or of that of Manasseh; the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, and the troubles and persecutions under the Maccabees, have each been supposed by different commentators to have given occasion to this Psalm. It may probably be assigned to the time of Ahaz, when the persecution of the true religion, and the injury and pollution done to the Temple, would come before the inspired prophet's mind as tokens and warnings of that more utter destruction which the sins of his nation would bring in the end upon their country, their Temple, and themselves, (2 Chron. xviii.; Isa. lxiv. 9—12). The Psalmist pleads before God the present misery of Judah, and the mercy which had been shewn to the people in times past, and appeals to His power to deliver them yet once again. The Leviathan, mentioned in verse 15, is generally supposed to be the crocodile, and to be used poetically as an emblem of Pharaoh king of Egypt. The writers of the Talmud have many fables respecting the Leviathan, which they say is re-

served to form a banquet for the elect at the last day, (compare the Apocrypha, 2 Esdras vi. 49—52). The author of this Psalm was Asaph; but there would seem to have been at least two Psalmists of this name, of whom the elder lived in the reign of David, while the younger lived in the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah, and was contemporary with Isaiah. The second Asaph wrote this Psalm.

Morning Prayer.

PSALM lxxv. *Confitebimur Tibi.*

1. UNTO Thee, O God, do we give thanks :
yea, unto Thee do we give thanks.

2. Thy Name also is so nigh : and that do
Thy wondrous words declare.

Thanksgivings ever repeated are due to God for His righteous rule over the world. He is ever watchful, ever near; and all that is done is by His ordaining or by His permission. ‘What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?’ None can for a moment doubt this or fail to see it, who will consider all His providences, how wonderfully they are made to work out right and truth, and to confound wrong and falsehood.

3. When I receive the congregation : I
shall judge according unto right.

Heb. For I shall fix a time

When I shall judge in righteousness.

Or,

When I hold the solemn assembly,

I give sentence with justice.

4. The earth is weak, and all the inhabitants thereof : I bear up the pillars of it.

God Himself declares that all the justice and righteousness of His government in the world, as it now goes on, is but a preparation for that great and final judgment which shall complete and end His dealings with man in his present state. When the Gospel has been preached to all the world, and the Church of Christ is extended even to the ends of the earth, then the end shall come. 'And now He commandeth men every where to repent; because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man Whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He raised Him from the dead.' In the meantime, He not only by His sovereign power sustains the universe, which without Him would return to the chaos from which it came; but He compassionates and supports the weakness of men, and by His grace and the ministry of His word and sacraments bears up even the best and wisest, 'who seem to be pillars,' who otherwise would fall, and be unable of themselves to rise again.

5. I said unto the fools, Deal not so madly : and to the ungodly, Set not up your horn.

6. Set not up your horn on high : and speak not with a stiff neck.

7. For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west : nor yet from the south.

Heb. For not from the rising of the sun, nor from the going down,

Nor from the wilderness is our raising up.

8. And why? God is the Judge : He putteth down one, and setteth up another.

In all times and in all places, the mighty righteousness of God has been a rebuke to those who in their folly thought to set up themselves and their own ungodly will. It is now even as it was when the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh to Hezekiah, 'to reproach the living God,' and as when 'he sent messengers again to Hezekiah, saying, Let not thy God in Whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hands of the king of Assyria.' Thus did the king of Assyria madly challenge the almightiness of God; he set up his own strength against that of God, and in his arrogance and haughtiness ventured to oppose his power to that of the Eternal. It was true that the kings of Assyria had destroyed many other nations, and even the kingdom of Israel among them; it was true that Hezekiah could expect no help either from the Chaldæans or Arabians on the east, or from ships that might bring aid from the west, or from the Egyptians marching through the deserts of the south. He had no hope of human aid; he knew that Egypt was but a broken reed: but he knew that God was the Judge and King, and that all power was in His hands. He was told that 'of long ago He had done it, and of ancient times that He

had formed it, and now that He had brought it to pass that the king of Assyria should be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps.' He Who had raised him up could put him down, and set up, when He would, another in his stead. In this faith 'he spake comfortably to his people, saying, Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him : for there be more with us than with him : with him is an arm of flesh ; but with us is the Lord our God to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.' He and they had grace to trust in Him Who 'scatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts ; Who puts down the mighty from their seat, and exalts the humble and meek.'

9. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red : it is full mixed, and He poureth out of the same.

Heb. There is a cup in the hand of the Lord,
It is red with wine :
It is full with mingled drink,
And He poureth out of it.

10. As for the dregs thereof : all the ungodly of the earth shall drink them, and suck them out.

There is a portion for the wicked which is given to them as wine is given to a man to drink : it is the vengeance and anger of God, strong and terrible. Like strong wine mingled with drugs overcomes and

stupidifies them who drink it, so does the wrath of God make sinners to tremble and stagger under it. They are made 'drunken, but not with wine:' and the impenitent cannot merely sip of that fearful cup, they have to drain it even to the very dregs. Their doom is, to be 'filled with their own devices.' Thus did the sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Pharaoh king of Egypt, and the idolaters of Canaan drink and perish. Of that same deadly cup drank Sennacherib king of Assyria, who had boasted against God and His people. For 'it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpses.'

11. But I will talk of the God of Jacob : and praise Him for ever.

12. All the horns of the ungodly also will I break : and the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

For this deliverance, wonderful and terrible, did Hezekiah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem praise their God Who helped them. Thus also must the Church ever praise Him for all His deliverances, whenever He vouchsafes them. He alone can put down the pride and destroy the power of the wicked. He alone can deprive the horns of brutish force and carnal will of their natural strength, and exalt them to spiritual strength, when they are converted into

the horns of His altar. He alone can raise up the righteous and the meek, and give them an inheritance with Himself. And He Who can do, by His own promise will do it ever.

“To the Chief Musician, Destroy not, a Psalm of Asaph, a Song of Praise,” is the title of this Psalm. It appears to have been written on the invasion of Jerusalem by Sennacherib, but before the destruction of the Assyrian army: (see 2 Kings xviii., 2 Chron. xxxii.). Its author was the younger Asaph, who was contemporary with Hezekiah. It bears the motto which David had used before, “Destroy not,” as if to warn the people that it was their own deliverance they should pray for, and not the mere destruction of their enemies; and in many points it resembles the song of Hannah in 1 Sam. ii.

PSALM lxxvi. *Notus in Judæa.*

1. In Jewry is God known : His Name is great in Israel.

2. At Salem is His tabernacle : and His dwelling in Sion.

LXX. And His place was in peace ;
And His habitation in Sion.

3. There brake He the arrows of the bow : the shield, the sword, and the battle.

In every nation there was, as it were, an altar ‘to the Unknown God,’ but in Judah was the true God known; it was the seed of Jacob who worshipped Him aright. The gods of other nations were but wood and stone, the work of men’s hands; but the one ever-living and Almighty God had chosen Salem for the place of His tabernacle. In that same Salem which was name

from peace, and in which He had been worshipped by Melchizedeck the priest and king, had He chosen to dwell—upon Sion, the mountain which He had made holy for Himself. Against His power and His truth had the king of Assyria sent the blasphemous message by the hand of Rabshakeh,—‘Who are they among all the gods of the countries that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?’ And the God of Sion, Whom he had thus challenged, answered him not merely by the word which He sent by Isaiah the prophet, but by the deed which He sent the angel of destruction to do:—‘The Lord sent an angel,’ which cut off all the mighty men of valour and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria.’ The arrows and the bow, the shield and the sword, and all the might of warlike array were nothing before the God of hosts. One of the least of His heavenly servants raised his arm, and their weapons were struck from their grasp, and their panoply was pierced through. His power was the deliverance of His people who could not deliver themselves. So it ever has been and will be—all the might of God’s enemies against His Church will be at length broken, and will vanish away. The power of the wicked is fleshly, earthly, mortal, but the power of the Church is spiritual, heavenly, immortal. Faith and prayer, weak though they may seem at first, will at last break to pieces sensual weapons, and will crush the mightiest hosts of the wicked and the cruel.

4. Thou art of more honour and might :
than the hills of the robbers.

LXX. Thou givest marvellous light
From the eternal mountains.

5. The proud are robbed, they have slept
their sleep : and all the men whose hands
were mighty have found nothing.

Heb. And all the mighty men have not found their hands.

6. At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob : both
the chariot and horse are fallen.

Sion, in which dwelt the ark of God, possessed a higher honour and was protected by a mightier arm than even Nineveh, 'the bloody city from which the prey departeth not.' The mountain of God, the type of the one true Church, was exalted far above the fortresses and mountain-towers of Assyria, from which her armies issued forth for devastation and plunder. They who had intended to 'cast a bank against' the holy city, themselves perished before her towers. They had come down like robbers upon Jerusalem, and they themselves and all their warlike pride were made a prey. The spoilers were spoiled. God sent a blast upon them. The deep sleep of pestilence and death fell over them, and they waked not again from that long lasting slumber. Mighty as they were, their stoutness and their skill were in vain ; against the hand of God they could not lift a hand either to assault Jerusalem or to defend themselves. He spoke in His anger, and the chariot and

the driver, the horse and the horseman, sank down into the silence of death, defeated and overcome : 'and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.' 'As soon as He scattered them, they were even as a sleep.' How different was that sleep from the sleep of those who rest in God !

7. Thou, even Thou art to be feared : and who may stand in Thy sight when Thou art angry ?

8. Thou didst cause Thy judgement to be heard from heaven : the earth trembled, and was still,

9. When God arose to judgement : and to help all the meek upon earth.

The eternal judgment of our God is that one thing which we must truly fear, His anger alone is truly terrible ; and every manifestation of His anger against the evil, and of His might in keeping His people safe, must lead the thoughts of the believer onward to that coming day when the throne shall be set in heaven, and the sentence of eternal justice shall go forth, when the earth and all earthly hopes and powers shall tremble, and its wild uproar shall be silent at the appearing of that unerring and Almighty Judge, Who shall reward both to the proud and cruel, and to the suffering and meek, according to their works.

10. The fierceness of man shall turn to Thy

praise : and the fierceness of them shalt Thou refrain.

The evil passions of the wicked turn to the praise of God in their own confusion. Holiness and goodness glorify the eternal God by their being the shadows of Himself; rage and violence glorify Him by perishing and being consumed before His presence. The rage of the sinner—‘howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so,’—is the weapon of God, which He employs to chasten him or to slay him. The wicked in their blinded fierceness work out His righteous judgments and decrees.

11. Promise unto the Lord your God, and keep it, all ye that are round about Him : bring presents unto Him that ought to be feared.

12. He shall refrain the spirit of princes : and is wonderful among the kings of the earth.

The deliverance which Hezekiah obtained was but a faint shadow of the deliverance wrought by Christ, therefore should the joy of Hezekiah be but a faint shadow also of the gratitude and love of the members of the Redeemer’s Church. If they have promised to keep His covenant, if they have vowed to offer to Him themselves, then are they bound in life and in death to do His will and to be His. The king of Babylon and the princes of the East brought presents to Hezekiah, when his enemies were discomfited ; how much more should the nations of the

world come with their offering to Him Who is the King of the better and heavenly Jerusalem, Who indeed ought to be feared, because the armies of death and hell have fallen before Him! He is the true King of kings, and all authority and all kingship is but a charge given in trust by Him. They who use it rightly, as ministers of authority under Him, shall, like Hezekiah, trust in Him in their dangers and be safe; they who abuse their power and disown Christ as their King and Judge, shall perish like the captains of Assyria; and over them the Church shall exult, like Judah over the fallen king,—‘Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria: thy nobles shall dwell in the dust: thy people is scattered in the mountains, and no man gathereth them!’

There can be very little doubt but that the same Asaph who wrote the seventy-fifth Psalm during the invasion of Sennacherib and the Assyrians, also was inspired to deliver this glorious song of faith and triumph upon the signal destruction of the army of the invading king. The LXX. give as part of the title, “An ode regarding the Assyrian.” Before the sword of the destroying angel, or before the blast of the sudden pestilence, the arrows and the bow, the shield and the sword, the horse and the chariot, and all the power and circumstance of war, were crushed and made utterly in vain. By this terrible act not only was the faith of Israel confirmed in God as their Deliverer and King, but His glory and might were displayed before the heathen nations, and especially before the Assyrians, who had blasphemed His majesty. (2 Kings xviii., xix.; 2 Chron. xxxii.; Nahum iii. 3, 18.)

PSALM lxxvii. *Voce mea ad Dominum.*

1. I WILL cry unto God with my voice : even unto God will I cry with my voice, and He shall hearken unto me.

2. In the time of my trouble I sought the Lord : my sore ran, and ceased not in the night-season ; my soul refused comfort.

Heb. My hand in the night is stretched out without ceasing ;
My soul will not be comforted.

LXX. With my hands toward Him in the night,
And I was not deceived.

3. When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God : when my heart is vexed, I will complain.

Prayer is man's real strength ; not careless prayer, which turns to God merely among other helpers, but ardent, ceaseless, unwearying prayer. If sickness be our trouble, we must seek for health ; if hunger be our trouble, we must seek for food ; if the absence of God's Spirit be our trouble, we must seek the Lord. Pain and grief, like a smarting wound, may drive away sleep from us ; but as our pain ceases not, so our prayer must not cease. The soul will not and cannot be comforted, unless by the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. In that heaviness is the time to think upon God ; when the heart is vexed with its own weakness and helplessness, it learns to pour out its complaint to Him.

4. Thou holdest mine eyes waking : am I so feeble, that I cannot speak.

5. I have considered the days of old : and the years that are past.

6. I call to remembrance my song : and in

the night I commune with mine own heart, and search out my spirits.

Trouble and sorrow at the dealings of God keep the eyes in sleeplessness; and with continual grief the mouth grows silent, and cannot speak aloud even to pray. But though the tongue cannot speak, the heart can meditate—can recall the memory of things long past, and the wonderful dealings of God in the ages that are gone. Such meditation is a silent prayer. To them who so meditate God ‘giveth songs in the night;’ and the soul so communing with itself can turn to Him, like the dove, sighing amid its singing, and yet singing amid its sighing. Then in the darkness and silence, apart from the noise without and the tumult of human things, the spirit can hold converse with itself, and search out its weakness and its strength.

7. Will the Lord absent Himself for ever : and will He be no more intreated ?

8. Is His mercy clean gone for ever : and is His promise come utterly to an end for evermore ?

9. Hath God forgotten to be gracious : and will He shut up His loving-kindness in displeasure ?

Its weakness is its want of trust; its doubt, as to whether God will hear prayer and will be entreated; its fear, that His mercy is come to an end, and that His promises have been forfeited beyond recall; its

dread, lest He has ceased to give His gifts of grace to those who have so long misused them, and lest the power of His love is restrained by His anger at unbelief and sin.

10. And I said, It is mine own infirmity : but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most Highest.

11. I will remember the works of the Lord : and call to mind Thy wonders of old time.

12. I will think also of all Thy works : and my talking shall be of Thy doings.

Its strength, on the other hand, is to know that its doubt, and fear, and dread arise from its own weakness and infirmity, and are not in any wise true respecting God. Our distress and trouble make our faith weak, but they do not alter the eternal purposes of God's love and grace. From the very beginning God's right hand has been working out eternal plans of mercy and love to man. With the history of these wonders may we instruct our fears and confirm our trust. He changes not, but is ever the same: therefore must we think not of our own troubles, but of His mighty works; and talk of His doings, of His endless faithfulness and living truth.

13. Thy way, O God, is holy : who is so great a God as our God ?

14. Thou art the God that doeth wonders : and hast declared Thy power among the people.

15. Thou hast mightily delivered Thy people : even the sons of Jacob and Joseph.

The way of God is eternally holy. He comes to us in holiness; He would lead us to Himself by the way of holiness; and His Holy One came to be Himself the way. Who or what is great as our God in righteousness, in patience, in pity, in love? He hath done wonders from the beginning of the creation; and especially in watching over and protecting them who trust in Him. He has made and will make all the peoples of the earth to know His power and to confess His truth. This He shewed in that strange deliverance by which He brought His people, the seed of Abraham, the twelve tribes who were the children of Jacob and of Joseph, out of the land of Egypt, confounding their oppressors with a mighty arm.

16. The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee, and were afraid : the depths also were troubled.

17. The clouds poured out water, the air thundered : and Thine arrows went abroad.

18. The voice of Thy thunder was heard round about : the lightnings shone upon the ground; the earth was moved, and shook withal.

Then the waters of the Red Sea saw the Lord, and retired like a timid slave from before his master; the depths were uncovered to make a way for His

people. Each one of the elements did the bidding of its Lord : the air and the fire, the water and the earth, were ministers to execute His command of destruction upon the proud and hardened tyrant and his hosts. And so too at that mightier deliverance which God wrought by His Son : all the people of the world, when they saw Him, were afraid for their sins, the depths of their consciences were troubled ; the teachings of His Gospel were poured down like water from the clouds, the proclaimings of His righteousness went abroad like thunderings and lightnings, and the earth was shaken by that mighty message which declared that God was made man.

19. Thy way is in the sea, and Thy paths in the great waters : and Thy footsteps are not known.

20. Thou leddest Thy people like sheep : by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Thus He made ' His people to pass a wonderful way out of the Red Sea, out of the violent stream, as a green field.' In the great waters was a road of safety for them, which was covered again by the waves, and lost when the Egyptians entered upon it. In His way none can follow but those He wills to follow Him. He Who then led His people through the sea, was that same Lord Who afterwards came to His disciples walking upon the sea. He led His people like a flock of sheep by the hand of Moses the prophet and Aaron the priest, Who came in after-time that He might Himself

lead them through the mystic paths of holy Baptism, into the better Canaan, and be at once their Prophet, their Priest, and their King. Let us therefore, His sheep, follow our Shepherd whither He would lead us; let us follow Him suffering, by self-denial; let us follow Him rising, by newness of life; let us follow Him ascending, by setting our affections on things above. In Him is comfort in all trouble; in Him lies an unfailing assurance of eternal mercy.

This Psalm is inscribed "to the Chief Musician Jeduthun, a Psalm of Asaph." Its tone is melancholy, and among the sorrows of the present the poet turns for comfort to the wonders and the glories of the past. It was probably written by the second Asaph during the distresses and troubles of the kingdom of Judah, which were brought upon them for their idolatry and neglect of the laws of Moses.

Ebening Prayer.

PSALM lxxviii. *Attendite, popule.*

1. HEAR my law, O my people : incline your ears unto the words of my mouth.

2. I will open my mouth in a parable : I will declare hard sentences of old ;

All wisdom flows from the Fount of wisdom. All right teachings and all holy knowledge, though they may come through the mouth of man, proceed from the wisdom and Word of God. The discipline of the law and the instructions of prophets were given

by that One great Prophet Who in the fulness of time came forth from the Father into the world. Asaph recounted the parables and the marvels of the history of Israel, but it was Christ Who set them before His people, and opened them to their understanding by their fulfilment in Himself and in His Church. 'These things spake Jesus to the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake He not unto them; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the beginning of the world.' The Light of the world shone on these dark sayings of old, and, lo, they were all images and pictures of Himself.

3. Which we have heard and known : and such as our fathers have told us ;

4. That we should not hide them from the children of the generations to come : but to shew the honour of the Lord, His mighty and wonderful works that He hath done.

Full of warning and of instruction was the history of the people of Israel. Each mercy that had been shewn them, each glory that had been given them, each judgment that had fallen on them, had its own peculiar lesson, and was a parable full of meaning. These things their fathers had told them, and these things they were to teach their children, that they might honour their eternal God and ever abide in His faith and fear. The wonderful works of God should

be the theme of our meditation on earth, for they will form that of our songs in heaven.

5. He made a covenant with Jacob, and gave Israel a law : which He commanded our forefathers to teach their children ;

6. That their posterity might know it : and the children which were yet unborn ;

7. To the intent that when they came up : they might shew their children the same ;

8. That they might put their trust in God : and not to forget the works of God, but to keep His commandments ;

9. And not to be as their forefathers, a faithless and stubborn generation : a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit cleaveth not stedfastly unto God ;

10. Like as the children of Ephraim : who being harnessed, and carrying bows, turned themselves back in the day of battle.

The Almighty God confirmed His covenant with Israel, and gave them by the hand of Moses His holy law. His command was, ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord ; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee shall be in thine heart ; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.’ His law was to be obeyed from generation to generation : each one who had learned its precepts from

his father was to teach them to his children, that they might fear God and walk in His ways, avoiding the stubbornness and disobedience of their fathers in the wilderness, and their idolatry and crimes under their Judges, striving not to be cowardly soldiers, but to fight manfully under the banner of the Lord of hosts, not as the archers of Ephraim who, though fully armed, fled before the face of the Philistines in that mournful day when the Ark of God was taken, and the sons of Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas were slain.

11. They kept not the covenant of God : and would not walk in His law ;

12. But forgot what He had done : and the wonderful works that He had shewed for them.

But God's most solemn charge to them they disobeyed. The holiness and purity of His law, and the mightiness of the wonders by which He confirmed it, were both lost upon them. They neglected what they had covenanted to do, because they forgot in their self-will and perverseness the things which had been done for them.

13. Marvellous things did He in the sight of our forefathers, in the land of Egypt : even in the field of Zoan.

LXX. In the land of Egypt, in the plain of Tanis.

14. He divided the sea, and let them go through : He made the waters to stand on an heap.

15. In the day-time also He led them with a cloud : and all the night through with a light of fire.

Yet He had done very wonderful deeds in sending upon Pharaoh and his people the ten plagues afflicting all the land of Egypt, and more especially the country round about Pharaoh's royal city of Zoan, or Tanis, which was bordering on the land of Goshen. And while He discomfited the oppressors, He was full of mercy to them. He led them through the very deep of the sea, and made the waters to stand like a wall on the one side of them and the other; He marched before them at their head Himself, and His banner for them was a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. And yet this wonderful deliverance was but the sign or parable of another which was to come after in the sacraments of His second law. For so the apostle teaches, when he says, 'Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea: and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.'

16. He clave the hard rocks in the wilderness : and gave them drink thereof, as it had been out of the great depth.

17. He brought waters out of the stony rock : so that it gushed out like the rivers.

At Rephidim, and at Kadesh, under the fiery heat of heaven and in the scorching plains of the desert,

He gave them water out of the hard rock in abundant fountains. For them He had made the water like a rock, and for them He made the rock to become water. And this too was a parable; for 'they did all drink,' the apostle tells us, 'the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ,'—even Him from Whose stricken side 'came blood and water.'

18. Yet for all this they sinned more against Him : and provoked the most Highest in the wilderness.

19. They tempted God in their hearts : and required meat for their lust.

20. They spake against God also, saying : Shall God prepare a table in the wilderness ?

21. He smote the stony rock indeed, that the water gushed out, and the streams flowed withal : but can He give bread also, or provide flesh for His people ?

22. When the Lord heard this, He was wroth : so the fire was kindled in Jacob, and there came up heavy displeasure against Israel ;

23. Because they believed not in God : and put not their trust in His help.

In their stubbornness and dead-heartedness these things were not enough to rouse up their faith. They sinned yet more. They thought in their hearts to try God, saying, 'Is the Lord among us or

not?" He had given them water, but would He give them bread and flesh also? They provoked Him on Whom they all depended. 'And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and His anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them; and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched. And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the Lord burnt among them.'

24. So He commanded the clouds above: and opened the doors of heaven.

25. He rained down manna also upon them for to eat: and gave them food from heaven.

26. So man did eat angels' food: for He sent them meat enough.

Heb. Man did eat the bread of the mighty ones.

But though He was wroth with them, He yet gave them what they cried for. He opened the storehouses of heaven, and sent down the manna for their food: He gave them dainty meat which He had prepared by the ministry of His angels; 'and when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it.' And this also was a parable and a dark thing of old: for Jesus the Son of God hath said, 'I am that Bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living Bread

which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.'

27. He caused the east-wind to blow under heaven: and through His power He brought in the south-west-wind.

28. He rained flesh upon them as thick as dust: and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.

29. He let it fall among their tents: even round about their habitation.

30. So they did eat, and were well filled; for He gave them their own desire: they were not disappointed of their lust.

31. But while the meat was yet in their mouths, the heavy wrath of God came upon them, and slew the wealthiest of them: yea, and smote down the chosen men that were in Israel.

They grew weary of the bread of heaven, and desired the flesh of earth. 'The mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? we remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers and the melons; but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.' 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Say thou unto the people,

Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the Lord, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore the Lord will give you flesh, and ye shall eat. Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; but even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the Lord Which is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?' 'And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. And all the people stood up, all that day and all that night and all the next day, and they gathered the quails. And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague, and He called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah: because there they buried the people that lusted.' This too is written for us as a parable which Christ would open. 'These things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.'

32. But for all this they sinned yet more : and believed not His wondrous works.

33. Therefore their days did He consume in vanity : and their years in trouble.

34. When He slew them, they sought Him : and turned them early, and enquired after God.

35. And they remembered that God was their strength : and that the high God was their redeemer.

36. Nevertheless, they did but flatter Him with their mouth : and dissembled with Him in their tongue.

37. For their heart was not whole with Him : neither continued they stedfast in His covenant.

38. But He was so merciful, that He forgave their misdeeds : and destroyed them not.

39. Yea, many a time turned He His wrath away : and would not suffer His whole displeasure to arise.

40. For He considered that they were but flesh : and that they were even a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.

To us who have been called into the family of Abraham, do the sins and weaknesses, the half-repentances, and fallings again of Israel in the wilderness, the wondrous wickednesses which kept pace with God's wondrous works, speak very plainly. They teach us by the mouth of St. Paul, 'Be not ye idolaters, as were some of them ; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to

play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.'

41. Many a time did they provoke Him in the wilderness : and grieved Him in the desert.

42. They turned back, and tempted God : and moved the Holy One in Israel.

By all their disobediences ten times repeated, they provoked His anger, and they grieved His love, during the forty years they wandered in the desert. His mercy and compassion they set at nought, and at one while determined to return back into Egypt; and at another, murmured against the God Who was bringing them into His promised rest. It is mournful to think how many a Christian soul may, like the Israelites in the desert, have its history written in three words — fall, repentance, relapse.

43. They thought not of His hand : and of the day when He delivered them from the hand of the enemy ;

44. How He had wrought His miracles in Egypt : and His wonders in the field of Zoan.

45. He turned their waters into blood : so that they might not drink of the rivers.

46. He sent lice among them, and devoured them up : and frogs to destroy them.

47. He gave their fruit unto the caterpillar : and their labour unto the grasshopper.

48. He destroyed their vines with hail-stones : and their mulberry-trees with the frost.

49. He smote their cattle also with hail-stones : and their flocks with hot thunderbolts.

50. He cast upon them the furiousness of His wrath, anger, displeasure, and trouble : and sent evil angels among them.

51. He made a way to His indignation, and spared not their soul from death : but gave their life over to the pestilence ;

LXX. And He consigned their cattle to death.

52. And smote all the firstborn in Egypt : the most principal and mightiest in the dwellings of Ham.

The judgments He had done on their enemies for their deliverance wrought no reverence nor fear in them. On their enemies had been brought ten plagues of destruction, to themselves had been given

ten commandments of holiness and truth. But the miracles which chastised Pharaoh,—the waters of the Nile turned to blood, the lice and the frogs, the locusts, the murrain and the storm, and those other blows which were dealt to the hardened king and his people by the destroying angels who acted as the messengers of God's wrath and anger, even to slaying the firstborn throughout that land of Egypt which was peopled by Misraim the son of Ham,—the recollection of these judgments upon their enemies touched them not, and they thought not of them.

53. But as for His own people, He led them forth like sheep : and carried them in the wilderness like a flock.

54. He brought them out safely, that they should not fear : and overwhelmed their enemies with the sea.

55. And brought them within the borders of His sanctuary : even to His mountain which He purchased with His right hand.

56. He cast out the heathen also before them : caused their land to be divided among them for an heritage, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

Nor did His goodness and mercy move them more deeply. He saved them from danger and fear, and destroyed their ancient enemies in the billows of the Red Sea, even as the sins of the baptized are washed

away in the waters of holy Baptism. He brought them to the land which He had promised to their fathers, and to that mountain in the land of Moriah of which He had told Abraham, and which He had consecrated of old to be the abode of His glory. He drove out the heathen dwellers before them, and divided the land of Canaan by lot to the twelve tribes of Israel, and gave the cities of those conquered nations for habitations to His people.

57. So they tempted, and displeased the most high God : and kept not His testimonies ;

58. But turned their backs, and fell away like their forefathers : starting aside like a broken bow.

59. For they grieved Him with their hill-altars : and provoked Him to displeasure with their images.

60. When God heard this, He was wroth : and took sore displeasure at Israel.

61. So that He forsook the tabernacle in Silo : even the tent that He had pitched among men.

62. He delivered their power into captivity : and their beauty into the enemy's hand.

63. He gave His people over also unto the sword : and was wroth with His inheritance.

64. The fire consumed their young men :

and their maidens were not given to marriage.

Heb. Their maidens were not praised in songs.

65. Their priests were slain with the sword : and there were no widows to make lamentation.

But when they were settled within the borders of the promised land, when all the blessings He had stored up for them were given to them, they were still the same stiffnecked people who had sinned in the wilderness. Adversity had not tamed them, nor had prosperity softened them. They still tempted God with their idolatry, and forsook His covenant. 'The children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord.' They fell away as their fathers had done, like an arrow from a broken bow, which disappoints the archer's aim, and instead of going to the mark glances aside, or falls idle at his feet. 'It came to pass that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings nor from their stubborn way. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel.' He gave them up to one enemy after another, until at length, for the sins of Hophni and Phinehas the priests, and for the evil-doings of the people, He allowed the ark of the covenant, the power and the beauty of Israel, to be brought from Shiloh from the tabernacle in which it dwelt, and to be taken by the Philistines in the battle. In that miserable rout

the people of Israel were trampled down and slain. The young men perished, not so much before their foes, as before the consuming fire of God's vengeance. Their joy and happiness ceased; He 'disinherited them' in His indignation. Eli the high-priest fell down dead at the news that the ark was taken. His sons Hophni and Phinehas were slain in the battle. The widow of Phinehas died in childbed, 'and she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.' The mournful chapter of punishment comes ever after the mournful chapter of sin.

66. So the Lord awaked as one out of sleep : and like a giant refreshed with wine.

67. He smote His enemies in the hinder parts : and put them to a perpetual shame.

But that mighty One 'Who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth' never forgets His own goodness: in anger He remembers mercy. He delivered again the ark from the Philistines; and brought it back into the coasts of Israel. He raised up Samuel to judge His people; and when on his exhortation the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ash-taroath, and served the Lord only, then the Lord heard them; and at Mizpeh, as 'the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel, the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.' Thus are the sins of Israel ever warnings to the Church, and the deliverances of

Israel earnestly of deliverance and safety to the Church.

68. He refused the tabernacle of Joseph : and chose not the tribe of Ephraim ;

69. But chose the tribe of Judah : even the hill of Sion which He loved.

70. And there He built His temple on high : and laid the foundation of it like the ground which He hath made continually.

But the ark returned no more to Shiloh in the tribe of Ephraim. The empty tabernacle was, indeed, left them for a while, to shew how the holiest things may be spoiled of their holiness by the sins of men, and to bear witness to the tribes which sprung from Joseph, how the birthright and the privileges which the righteousness and innocence of their ancestor had gained had been forfeited by the guilt and the faithlessness of his descendants. By this God said, 'Go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel.' Shiloh was deserted. From Shiloh the tabernacle was removed to Nob, and again to Gibeon, 'the great high place : ' but the ark never returned to it, nor to the priests of the house of Eli. It abode in Kirjath-jearim, and it tarried for a while in the house of Obed-edom, until it found its resting-place in the tribe of Judah, on the hill of Sion. There was the foundation of the temple laid, in which God was to be worshipped by His people. And thus, too, does

Shiloh seem to be a parable of the Jewish Church, which for its sins was left desolate, while its glory was given to the spiritual Sion, 'that city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.'

71. He chose David also His servant : and took him away from the sheep-folds.

72. As he was following the ewes great with young ones He took him : that he might feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance.

73. So he fed them with a faithful and true heart : and ruled them prudently with all his power.

Even as Ephraim lost the privilege of keeping the tabernacle and the ark, so did Benjamin lose the dignity of the royal tribe. God chose the tribe of Judah, but He chose Judah for the sake of David, and David for the sake of Christ. Christ was of the seed of David, therefore was David a parable of Christ. David was called from being a shepherd of sheep to be a shepherd of men. The Lord of hosts said unto him, 'I took thee from the sheep-cote, even from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler over My people Israel.' And Christ also 'feedeth His flock like a shepherd, He gathereth the lambs with His arm, and carrieth them in His bosom, and gently leadeth those that are with young.' David, as a faithful shepherd, governed his people with truth and wisdom, using his sceptre as a shepherd's crook, and not as a tyrant's scourge ; and in this, too, is he the type of that Good Shepherd, Who

began the work of feeding His flock in humiliation, even laying down His life for His sheep, that He might fulfil it in bringing His Church to immortal glory, as the Lord of righteousness and the all-wise King of all.

This Psalm, which is a "Maschil, or Instruction of Asaph," was written in the reign of David. The first object of this poem was, no doubt, to instruct the children at the Feast of the Passover, when, according to the law of Moses and the Jewish custom, the younger children enquired of their parents the reasons for their celebrating that great festival, and were, in answer, taught of the wonderful dealings of God with His people, in memory of which the feast was kept. The word 'Maschil' denotes, probably, a poem to be committed to memory. The second object of the Psalm seems to have been to assign the reasons for the honour of guarding the ark and possessing the tabernacle, being taken from the tribe of Ephraim and transferred to that of Judah. Ephraim was at first the leading tribe in Israel. The birth-right was in Joseph's family, and was given by Jacob to Ephraim, and the children of Rachel, Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh took the lead in war (Ps. lxxx. 2). The name of Ephraim was often given to the whole nation. David, being of the tribe of Judah, at first reigned over his own tribe only in Hebron; but, after an interval of seven years, the other tribes submitted to him, and he became the king of the whole nation. The union was, however, never complete; there was always a spirit of rivalry between the two leading tribes; and the jealousy between Judah and Ephraim, which this Psalm seems intended to dispel, resulted at last in the revolt of the ten tribes, and the establishment at the death of Solomon of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel. But of this revolt there is no mention in this psalm which was composed previously to it. Asaph shews that while the sanctuary continued at Shiloh in Ephraim, the nation of Israel were punished and defeated in battle, until at last the ark of God was taken from them by the Philistines. Zoan, or Tanis, in verses 13 and 44, was the capital of Lower Egypt, distant about twenty-five miles from the land of Goshen. The village on its site is still called San. The book of Numbers is quoted and referred to throughout this poetical and beautiful Psalm: it is therefore certain that it was well known and studied with care in the reign of David. Verse 2 is applied by St. Matthew (xiii. 35) to the mode of our Saviour's teaching by parables and similitudes.

Morning Prayer.

PSALM LXXIX. *Deus, venerunt.*

1. O GOD, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance : Thy holy temple have they defiled, and made Jerusalem an heap of stones.

2. The dead bodies of Thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the air : and the flesh of Thy saints unto the beasts of the land.

3. Their blood have they shed like water on every side of Jerusalem : and there was no man to bury them.

4. We are become an open shame to our enemies : a very scorn and derision unto them that are round about us.

It is a dark and mournful sight when the heathen enter into the inheritance of God, and defile the temple of His holiness ; dark and mournful, even as the sight of lusts and sins entering into a redeemed soul and polluting what has been made the temple of the Holy Ghost. Misery and destruction must ever follow unrighteousness and double-heartedness ; from this law no race or Church, however high their privileges or great their grace, can hope to escape. The Jewish nation and the Jewish Church could not escape it. Their sins brought woe upon them ; when under Ahaz their king they turned to idols, then

Judah was made naked, and Tiglath-pileser, the king of Assyria, distressed them, and their temple was defiled and spoiled, and 'their fathers fell by the sword, and their sons and their daughters and their wives were in captivity for this' their sin. But the warning of that punishment was not enough, and it was sent again to them with deeper severity, when the wrath of the Lord arose against His people till there was no remedy. 'Therefore He brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: He gave them all into his hand. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.' And after they had returned from Babylon, and had rebuilt the temple, and restored Jerusalem, still they suffered and were afflicted. In the time of the Maccabees, Demetrius, the son of Seleucus, sent Bacchides to Jerusalem; who slew the scribes, who came to require justice, and the Assideans, the first of the children of Israel who sought peace of them. Bacchides 'took of them threescore men, and slew them in one day, according to the words which he wrote, The flesh of Thy saints have they cast out, and their blood have they shed round about Jerusalem, and there was none to bury them.' And in that last and most fearful destruction, when the eagles of Rome were gathered round the doomed city, and the temple of which God had said,

‘Let us depart hence ;’ when one stone was not to be left upon another, when the fire was to consume the sanctuary, and the foundations of Sion were to be ploughed up ; when Jerusalem was to be filled with slain, and the sons of Judah were to be crucified round her walls in such thick multitudes that no more room was left for death ; when insult and shame and scorn was the lot of the child of Israel, as he wandered an outcast, a fugitive in all lands ; when all these bitter and deadly things came upon Jerusalem, it was as a punishment for many and long-repeated crimes ; it was the accomplishment of a warning which had been often sent in vain. Yea, fiercely did thy foes assault thee, O Jerusalem, but thy sins more fiercely still !

5. Lord, how long wilt Thou be angry : shall Thy jealousy burn like fire for ever ?

6. Pour out Thine indignation upon the heathen that have not known Thee : and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon Thy Name.

7. For they have devoured Jacob : and laid waste his dwelling-place.

Then, like an erring soul groaning under the chastisement of its sins, the people which have fallen from both righteousness and peace can turn only to the God Whom their sins made angry, and plead before Him their misery and their sorrow. The hands of their enemies may have wrought them harm, but it was their own sins which furnished the

instruments of desolation. It was pride and selfishness and lust which made an inroad into the heart which should have been the inheritance of God, and laid waste the conscience which should have been His dwelling-place.

8. O remember not our old sins, but have mercy upon us, and that soon : for we are come to great misery.

9. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy Name : O deliver us, and be merciful unto our sins, for Thy Name's sake.

10. Wherefore do the heathen say : Where is now their God ?

11. O let the vengeance of Thy servants' blood that is shed : be openly shewed upon the heathen in our sight.

In all suffering and in all sorrow, yes, and in suffering for sin, the soul must turn to God in prayer. 'Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers, neither take Thou vengeance of our sins.' In each one who prays prayer will conquer sin, or sin will silence prayer. In prayer they who wish to be forgiven must bring before the God of mercy every plea that the soul can urge,—His own mercies in time past, the unbelief and mockeries of the wicked, the promises of God, which He will not render vain. Thus did Jerusalem, in her great misery, plead His promise made by Moses,—'Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people, for He will

avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful unto His land, and to His people.'

12. O let the sorrowful sighing of the prisoners come before Thee : according to the greatness of Thy power, preserve Thou those that are appointed to die.

13. And for the blasphemy wherewith our neighbours have blasphemed Thee : reward Thou them, O Lord, seven-fold into their bosom.

14. So we, that are Thy people, and sheep of Thy pasture, shall give Thee thanks for ever : and will alway be shewing forth Thy praise from generation to generation.

As the saints in Judæa of old time prayed from the depths of an earthly prison, and trusted in their God even under the sentence of this world's death, knowing well that the power of their God could deliver them, and could requite the blasphemies of their enemies in full measure to those who strove to hinder their salvation ; so, too, must we turn with groanings from the prison of our hardness of heart and carnal will, and implore to be delivered from that spiritual death which our enemies, that is, our own sins, have brought upon us. We should cry to Him to 'strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.' And while we, who are, no less than Israel of old, God's people and the sheep of

His pasture, and who, no less than they, need to confess that 'we have erred and strayed from His ways like lost sheep,' acknowledge our sins and implore for pardon and restoration, we must not forget that higher duty of thanksgiving and ceaseless praise which forgiveness calls for, and which only they who are forgiven can perform.

This mournful Psalm, which was written by Asaph, evidently refers to the same period of desolation and idolatry as the seventy-fourth; that is to say, to the reign of Ahaz. Some commentators have endeavoured to assign the composition of these Psalms to the times of the Maccabees, and especially to the time of that cruel war which Bacchides carried on against Jerusalem, in which Judas Maccabæus was slain. It is true that verses 2 and 3 are quoted in 1 Maccabees vii. 17; but this is so far from shewing that this Psalm was composed at that time, that it rather proves, on the other hand, that the book in which it is found was already recognised as a portion of canonical scripture, and was considered to be prophetic of the misery and oppression of Israel. The Syriac translation of 1 Macc. vii. 16, is "according to the words which the prophet wrote," which is the usual way of citing a passage of Holy Scripture. Verses 6, 7 are repeated, word for word, by the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. x. 25); and this would be an additional reason for assigning the Psalm to the earlier devastations of the temple, for it is usual for the prophets to repeat the words of a scripture older than their own, and not of that of their own time.

PSALM lxxx. *Qui regis Israel.*

1. HEAR, O Thou Shepherd of Israel, Thou that ledest Joseph like a sheep : shew Thyself also, Thou that sittest upon the cherubims.

2. Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasses : stir up Thy strength, and come, and help us.

3. Turn us again, O God : shew the light of Thy countenance, and we shall be whole.

He Who had once been the Shepherd of Israel, Who had led the children of Joseph and of his brethren into the pleasant pastures of the promised land, had left them. The ark of His covenant and the glory of His presence was still between the cherubim in the sanctuary of His temple, and He still was the Lord of all the powers of heaven and earth, but He no longer went with their armies and led them to battle. Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, the sons of Rachel, had gone to the war as the vanguard of the hosts of Israel, but the might and power of their Almighty King went no longer with them to help them, and to give them victory. He had given them up to Shalmanezzer, king of the Assyrians, who had led them into a long captivity, for 'the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.' Therefore it was indeed needful that they that were left should pray for the grace of repentance, and for the return of the blessing of the light of His countenance which their misdeeds had forfeited, and in which alone they could be safe.

4. O Lord God of hosts : how long wilt Thou be angry with Thy people that prayeth ?

5. Thou feedest them with the bread of tears : and givest them plenteousness of tears to drink.

6. Thou hast made us a very strife unto our

neighbours : and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

7. Turn us again, Thou God of hosts : shew the light of Thy countenance, and we shall be whole.

That eternal God of angels and of men was indeed angry with His people for their idolatries and transgressions, and their prayers had well-nigh ceased to be of avail. 'The Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until He had cast them out of His sight.' He Who once gave them the bread of heaven, now filled them with the bread of sorrow ; He Who had given them water from the rock, now gave them only their own tears to drink. Their nearer and smaller enemies, Ammon, and Moab, and Edom, renewed their contentions with them, and treated them with scorn. They only could hope in repentance, and the returning to them again of the God Whose blessing they had lost.

8. Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt : Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.

9. Thou madest room for it : and when it had taken root it filled the land.

10. The hills were covered with the shadow of it : and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedar-trees.

Heb. The hills were covered with its shadow :
The cedars of God with its branches.

11. She stretched out her branches unto the sea : and her boughs unto the river.

God, like a wise husbandman transplanting a choice vine, had brought the Church of Israel out of Egypt into the rich and fertile land of Canaan. He cast out the heathen dwellers as evil weeds, and planted it within His vineyard. It struck down its roots into the earth, and its branches and tendrils covered the sides of the mountains with their shade, and climbed up even above the lofty cedars of Lebanon. The blessing of Jacob was fulfilled—‘Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall.’ From the mountains on the south to Lebanon on the north, from the river Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea did the power of Israel extend, while her Church abode in the fear and worship of her God in the days of David and of Solomon.

12. Why hast Thou then broken down her hedge : that all they that go by pluck off her grapes ?

13. The wild boar out of the wood doth root it up : and the wild beasts of the field devour it.

14. Turn Thee again, Thou God of hosts, look down from heaven : behold, and visit this vine ;

15. And the place of the vineyard that Thy

right hand hath planted : and the branch that Thou madest so strong for Thyself.

But the hedge which God had placed around her was broken. Israel and Judah were divided the one from the other ; and both turned to idols, and forgot Him Who was their defence. They despised and transgressed His law. Then the nations round about them laid their country waste ; and the Assyrian king, like a wild boar ravaging in a vineyard, destroyed and uprooted Israel. Their enemies devoured them as savage beasts devour their prey. The few that were left, and they that beheld their desolation, could only trust that God would at length turn Himself to behold their sad and captive state, and visit them in mercy, as He had visited them in wrath, once more to build up the walls of His Church and vineyard, and to raise the broken and withering vine, even the people, which was once His own ; ‘for the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant.’

16. It is burnt with fire, and cut down : and they shall perish at the rebuke of Thy countenance.

17. Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand : and upon the son of Man, whom Thou madest so strong for Thine own self.

Now Israel is destroyed, her sons are led captive, and her cities are cast down and burnt with fire ;

but in the mercy and power of her God these chastisements may soon be turned against her destroyers. In the frown of Almighty anger, the wild beasts of the nations and the boar of Assyria will perish and be utterly destroyed. But their hope can only lie in Him Who will come, 'the Man Whose Name is the Branch,' the true Benjamin, the Son of the right hand, even that Son of Man Who, in His own good time and His own mighty grace, shall gather together the dispersed of Israel, and shall bring the outcasts of Judah into the Church of the new covenant, and shall teach them to hear His voice, when He says, 'I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Mé, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.'

18. And so will not we go back from Thee :
O let us live, and we shall call upon Thy
Name.

19. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts :
shew the light of Thy countenance, and we
shall be whole.

Then shall they repent and not go back; then shall they know and see Him Who is the true Life, and shall say, 'Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.' The repentance of Israel when they were led captive was too late, the repentance of Judah under Hezekiah saved them but for a time; but in that last great repentance, when the children of Jacob shall once again be turned unto Christ their God and King, there shall be no more falling.

They shall be blessed for ever with a perfect blessing, by a greater Priest than any of the line of Aaron, a blessing of deed and not of word, the very seeing of the face of God, and the very being saved with His salvation.

This Psalm is “to the chief Musician upon Shoshannim-Eduth, or the lilies of the testimony.” Compare the titles of Psalms lx. and lxi. The title as given by the LXX. is, “For those who shall be changed, a testimony of Asaph, a Psalm on the Assyrian.” It was undoubtedly written by the younger Asaph, about the time when Samaria was taken and Israel was carried away captive by Shalman-ezer, king of Assyria, (2 Kings xvii.) That the Psalm refers to the affliction of Israel rather than that of Judah, is clear from verses 1, 2, where Joseph and the tribes sprung from Rachel are especially named, while no allusion is made to the temple, or to Sion. The comparison of Israel to a vine or to a vineyard is very frequently used in the Scriptures, as in Isaiah v. 2—7; St. Luke xx. 9—17; and for this reason the emblem of a large golden vine was placed above the gate of the vestibule of the temple. The sight of this emblem has been supposed to have given occasion to our Lord, as He was proceeding with His apostles to the garden of Gethsemane, to address to them that discourse on His being the true Vine, which is found in St. John xv. Verses 3, 7, 14, 19 of this Psalm refer to the solemn blessing which was pronounced by the high-priest, (Num. vi. 23—27,) the fulfilment of which Israel had forfeited by their idolatries.

PSALM lxxxi. *Exultate Deo.*

1. SING we merrily unto God our strength :
make a cheerful noise unto the God of Jacob.

2. Take the psalm, bring hither the tabret :
the merry harp with the lute.

3. Blow up the trumpet in the new-moon :
even in the time appointed, and upon our
solemn feast-day.

Hymns of joy and merry songs well become the mouths of those who have God for their strength. Gladness and cheerfulness spring naturally from earnest faith. God will give us what we should sing, if we will sing it aright. Let us, the members of His Church, bring willing hearts and tuneful voices, and chaste and holy music, and He will give us the psalm of praise which will fit with our days of festival. The tabret and the harp, the lute and the trumpet, are, as it were, our earthly members, which we consecrate to the praise and service of our God; the psalm is that inspired song of spiritual melody which the Holy Spirit bids us take into our mouths. Like the Levites at the feast of trumpets at the beginning of the seventh month, so must we 'lift up our voice like a trumpet,' to proclaim the righteousness and faithfulness of our God, 'rejoicing in the Lord alway,' Who by His grace and love hath made all our life a festival of joy.

4. For this was made a statute for Israel : and a law of the God of Jacob.

5. This He ordained in Joseph for a testimony : when he came out of the land of Egypt, and had heard a strange language.

Heb. And I heard a language I knew not.

'And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.' This was ordained that the chil-

dren of Jacob and of Joseph, who had long dwelt in Egypt, should for ever remember that blast of the trumpet, ever louder and louder, and that proclamation of the law of God on Sinai, which He Himself made unto them, Whose voice man had never heard before. If, then, the feasts of the law were to be kept by Israel with holy joy, and praise, and song, much more should the festivals of Him, Who delivered us from the more dreadful dungeon than Egypt, and the fiercer tyrant than Pharaoh, and taught us the deeper mysteries of the Gospel, be hallowed with melody and solemn gladness!

6. I eased his shoulder from the burden : and his hands were delivered from making the pots.

7. Thou calledst upon Me in troub'es, and I delivered thee : and heard thee what time as the storm fell upon thee.

Heb. I heard thee in the place of thunder.

8. I proved thee also : at the waters of strife.

On the return of each one of these solemn feast-days, God seemed to recal to the memory of His people the mighty deeds He had done for them,—how He had given their shoulders rest from the heavy burdens of clay, and had delivered their hands from the wearying toil of the brick-kiln ; how He had saved them from the rage of Pharaoh, when they cried in their distress and fear ; how He had

heard them in His dark pavilion of storms on Sinai, and how He proved them at Massah and Meribah, when they tempted Him, and said, 'Is the Lord among us or not?'

9. Hear, O My people, and I will assure thee, O Israel : if thou wilt hearken unto Me,

10. There shall no strange god be in thee : neither shalt thou worship any other god.

11. I am the Lord thy God, Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt : open thy mouth wide, and I shall fill it.

'Hear, O Israel : the Lord our God is one Lord : and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.' It is the confession that God is our God, that keeps us His people. If we hear Him and obey, and have faith in His most true assurance, then can we not worship any other but Him. No created thing, nor idol made with hands, can be aught to them whose hearts are fixed upon the living God. He redeemed Israel from Egypt ; He redeemed His people from the slavery of sin and the doom of death ; His riches suffice for all our wants ; there is no measure to His givings, but the measure of man's necessity. He satisfies His people with good things, even as a parent bird feeds her nestlings when they open their mouths for food. What is the mouth of the inner man but the desire of the heart? And this only God Himself can fill.

12. But My people would not hear My voice : and Israel would not obey Me.

13. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts : and let them follow their own imaginations.

It was not to strangers, but to His own people, that the God of eternal love revealed Himself. They were not strangers, but His own people, that would not hear His voice, nor obey Him. They chose their own will rather than the Divine will, and their punishment was that they were allowed to have it. God let them follow, not His commandments of salvation, but their own imaginations. So He 'gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.' Man can be given up to no more deadly enemy, to no more cruel tyrant, than to himself.

14. O that My people would have hearkened unto Me : for if Israel had walked in My ways,

15. I should soon have put down their enemies : and turned My hand against their adversaries.

16. The haters of the Lord should have been found liars : but their time should have endured for ever.

Yet the tenderness of our eternal Father and most loving God is not made void even by man's headstrong self-will. He repeats again the offer of

His gracious care, and calls again the wanderers to their only real rest. Should not the very stones—and hearts even harder than stones—be moved at hearing the complaint of God? He is longing that they should hear Him; He is yearning for their obedience, that they may still be His, that He may put down their enemies and destroy their foes, and, while the hypocrites and false-hearted and ungodly perish, receive them into eternal and unending peace.

17. He should have fed them also with the finest wheat-flour : and with honey out of the stony rock should I have satisfied thee.

Yea, to us unheeding, self-willed, wandering Israelites the Lord of life is ever offering that living bread which came down from heaven, even His own body, which was bruised and broken for the life of the world. A little food can satisfy the cravings of the body, but the whole world cannot fill the longings of the soul; and therefore would He Who made us satisfy us, not with created dainties, but with the richness of the grace and the sweetness of the love of Him on Whom the Church is built, even Christ, the Rock and the Corner-stone. He bids us open not our mouth only, but our heart, and He will feed us and fill us with Himself.

It is clear that this Psalm was written for some one of the festivals of the Jewish Church. It was written by that Asaph who lived in the reign of David, "On Gittith," (for the meaning of this word, compare the title of Ps. viii.) The doubt arises as to which of the great feasts it was intended for. Some commentators consider that it was for the Passover, others for the Feast of Pentecost. It is more probable that

it was composed for the celebration of the Feast of Trumpets, which was held on the new moon, at the beginning of the seventh month, fourteen days before the Feast of Tabernacles, (Levit. xxiii. 24; Num. xxix. 1). It was, and still is, used by the Jews on the occasion of that festival. Theodoret considers that the Feast of Trumpets was intended to commemorate the giving of the Law on Sinai, when the trumpet of God sounded exceeding loud amid the darkness and cloud, (Exod. xix. 16). The mention of the instruments of music in verses 2, 8, the tambour, the harp, and the lute, in addition to the trumpets, which gave the name to the feast, prove how thoroughly choral in its character the worship of God in the tabernacle and temple was, and how all the means which the worshippers could command were employed to heighten the harmony of the music, and to stir up the devotional feelings of those who joined in the service. For the nature and shape of these different instruments of music, the reader is referred to the various paintings and sculptures which have been discovered in Egypt, and also to those which have been lately brought to light from the ruins of Nineveh. An inspection of these will give more information on the subject of the ancient Oriental musical instruments than could be conveyed by pages of description.

Ebening Prayer.

PSALM lxxxii. *Deus stetit.*

1. GOD standeth in the congregation of princes : He is a Judge among gods.

All they who have authority and power over others have it only by the allowance of the Almighty Ruler of the world. He is the King over kings, and the Judge over judges ; He stands, though unseen, in their councils, and watches their decisions. All authority is by the will and ordinance of God ; it is held under Him. There is something divine in all power over others ; they who obey it obey God in it ; they who despise it despise the ordinance of

God. He it was Who said to Moses, when He invested him with power and sent him to bring Israel out of Egypt,—‘I have made thee a god unto Pharaoh.’ They, therefore, who execute justice are set for the time, as it were, in the place of God, and their grand and lofty calling is to do the same work which God does in the world.

2. How long will ye give wrong judgment : and accept the persons of the ungodly ?

For them, if they misuse the power, if they persist in judging wrongly and perversely, if they destroy the plain landmarks of good and evil, and right and wrong, if they favour the wicked, and allow them to escape the punishment their misdeeds deserve, while the innocent suffer and are oppressed,—for such there will come a time when the patience of the All-righteous will be exhausted, and He will deal with them in His vengeance.

3. Defend the poor and fatherless : see that such as are in need and necessity have right.

4. Deliver the outcast and poor : save them from the hand of the ungodly.

This solemn truth—that they who have authority over others are in the place of God, and that He, though unseen, is standing among them, and very searchingly overlooks their doings, was set before the judges of Judah by Jehoshaphat, when ‘he set judges in the land, throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city, and said to the judges, Take

heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, Who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.' Power is given to men not to indulge their pride or their selfishness, but that they may help them who need a helper, that they may take care that the poor and needy are not treated with injustice, that they save the weak and the distressed from those who would act tyrannically and cruelly towards them.

5. They will not be learned nor understand, but walk on still in darkness : all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

There are, and ever have been, too many who would not understand this, who have blinded their own eyes, and would not see how most necessary it is that they who share the divine authority should abide in the divine righteousness. On them the warnings and the precepts of the Almighty are lost. They close their eyes to the light of holiness and truth, and go on following their own lusts and selfish wills, in darkness and bewilderment. They do most serious and fatal mischief by their unholy conduct. They ruin others besides themselves, being, like the Pharisees were, 'blind leaders of the blind;' and by their selfish misuse of that which God has for a time trusted to their care—the administering of His law and His justice—the foundations of right and truth,

on which the world rests, are broken up for a while, and torn asunder. Whether they who act unrighteously be kings and judges in the state, or priests and teachers in the Church, it is all one; they are bound to do God's justice and to speak God's truth in all things.

6. I have said, Ye are gods : and ye are all the children of the most Highest.

7. But ye shall die like men : and fall like one of the princes.

All judges are types of Him Who is the Judge; all authority is a shadow of His power Who is Lord of all. From His crown of righteousness all earthly crowns receive their splendour. If, then, the commands of earthly judges, who are men, be from God, and to be obeyed, how much more must His commandments be obeyed Who was the eternal Son? This the selfish rulers of the Jews could not understand, and in their blind judgment they would have stoned the Son of God, Who Himself stood among them; but 'Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If He called them gods, unto whom the Word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of Him Whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?' If the Word Himself be the everlasting God, then they who partake in the Word of God are also set for a time in the place of God. Again, if they to whom the truth of God has been revealed be

called to be the children of the most Highest, how much more is He Who is the revelation of the truth and the Truth itself, to be worshipped as the Almighty Son! But power without justice, and gifts without holiness, are of no avail to them that have them only to abuse them. Kings and judges, priests and prophets, will die and be judged for their deeds, even as the poorest and the meanest are. There is a judgment coming which is called the Last, in which all foregoing judgments will be judged. They who are raised the highest here will then fall the lowest, if their actions have been unrighteous and self-willed; even as the Prince of evil fell from his seat in heaven into the abyss of unending ruin.

8. Arise, O God, and judge Thou the earth : for Thou shalt take all heathen to Thine inheritance.

God only lends authority and power; He does not give it. His charge with all His gifts is, 'Occupy till I come.' This world, with its powers and honours, is but a dispensation lasting for a time: the hour is coming when Christ Himself, a visible and unerring Judge, shall put aside all earthly vicegerents, to whom for awhile He has given His Name, though not His attributes, shall take into His own hands all authority and power, and shall assume as His own inheritance a kingdom of righteousness over all the nations of the world.

This Psalm was written by Asaph, upon the occasion of Jehoshaphat instituting judges throughout Judæa, (2 Chron. xix. 5—7). It would

seem from many passages of Scripture, such as Isa. i. 17, 28; Amos ii. 6, 7; Micah vii. 2—4, that the judges in the land of Judah were often most unjust and corrupt. It was therefore needful to set before them the high and holy nature of their office, (Eccles. x. 2,) which they shared with God Himself. In the Hebrew language, the very name of the Triune God, "*Elohim*," signifies also "judges," so that the expression in verse 6, "I have said, Ye are gods," is the same as if He had said, "I have said, Ye are judges." Our Lord makes use of this verse against the Pharisees, who accused Him of blasphemy because He had declared that He was the Son of God. His argument is, that if they who were made judges by man, and had authority given them under the law to execute justice, bore not only the office, but the very Name, of the God in Whose behalf they acted,—and this by the infallible testimony of Scripture they did,—how could it be blasphemy for Him, Whom the Father had sanctified, and sent into the world to be His own appointed Judge, to claim the same title in its fulness, as He bore the same office in its fulness? (St. John x. 34.) Thus are we taught that, as all earthly goodness is from Christ, and is a shadow of His goodness, so too all earthly power is from Him, and is a shadow of His power. It has been well and forcibly said, that "every prince and judge should have the verses of this Psalm not only painted upon the walls of his house, but inscribed over his bed and above his table, and even embroidered upon his clothes."

PSALM lxxxiii. *Deus, quis similis.*

1. HOLD not Thy tongue, O God, keep not still silence : refrain not Thyself, O God.

LXX. O God, who shall be likened unto Thee ?

Be not silent, refrain not, O God.

There are times in the history of the Church, when the trials and distresses that surround her seem to pass the power of man to escape, or the strength of man to bear. It is written, that it will be so yet again in the last dread trial of the faith of God's people by the craft and violence of Antichrist.

Then will the Church have to raise her prayer, that He, Who once was silent that He might be judged, when He came veiled with humility, will come again in unveiled glory not to be silent, but to pronounce that judgment which can neither be shunned nor turned aside. Then will it be seen that there is none like Him in might, as there is none like Him in mercy.

2. For lo, Thine enemies make a murmuring : and they that hate Thee have lift up their head.

3. They have imagined craftily against Thy people : and taken counsel against Thy secret ones.

4. They have said, Come, and let us root them out, that they be no more a people : and that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

They who seek to injure Christ's people, seek to injure Him. They who hate Him, hate His Church. They who would persecute Him, persecute His disciples. So will it be in the latter days, when the murmuring of the tide shall be turned into the roaring of the sea and its waves, and all the enemies of God, gathering themselves from every side, shall openly and boldly attack His kingdom upon earth, and shall seek to destroy and abolish all that is His, and that serves Him, and to annul, if it were possible, that decree of love upon which the election of the Church of His saints has rested from eternity.

5. For they have cast their heads together with one consent : and are confederate against Thee ;

6. The tabernacles of the Edomites, and the Ismaelites : the Moabites, and Hagarens ;

7. Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek : the Philistines, with them that dwell at Tyre.

8. Assur also is joined with them : and have holpen the children of Lot.

The trials of Israel are ever a type of the trials of the Christian Church; and the assaults of Satan against her in all their varied forms are prefigured by the attacks of the enemies of Jerusalem. Therefore, in that vast conspiracy into which all the nations round Judæa entered in the days of Jehoshaphat, 'to cast Israel out of God's possession which He had given them to inherit,' there is a prophecy and a warning for all time. Then the Edomites and the Moabites brought together all their allies, from the south, from the east, and from the north, to enclose the devoted nation of Judah as in a snare. The children of profane Esau, and those of Ishmael the mocker, and of the bond-woman Hagar his mother, whom the Reubenites had dispossessed of their land, the Moabites and Ammonites, the sin-born descendants of Lot, the tribes of the Arabians of the district of Gebal, who were the neighbours of the Edomites, and the Amalekites, the deadly enemies of Israel,—these from the south and east had called to their aid the Philistines of the western coast, and the hirelings

of Tyre, and had joined in their cruel confederacy the Assyrians from the distant north. They had conspired to do to Israel as Israel had done to the Amorites and Canaanites. This was the mighty armament of which 'there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they be in Hazazon-Tamar, which is En-gedi.'

9. But do Thou to them as unto the Madianites : unto Sisera, and unto Jabin at the brook of Kison ;

10. Who perished at Endor : and became as the dung of the earth.

11. Make them and their princes like Oreb and Zeb : yea, make all their princes like as Zeba and Salmana ;

12. Who say, Let us take to ourselves : the houses of God in possession.

But Jehoshaphat and his people trusted not in man, but in God. He prayed, 'O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee.' And so he went against his enemies not with the weapons of flesh, but the weapons of faith. He appointed before his army singers to praise God for His mercy; 'and when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of

Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.' Their confederacy became their destruction:—'For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.' As God had destroyed the adversaries of His people in past times, so did He destroy them again. They were scattered and destroyed, as the Midianites were before Gideon, and the Canaanites before Barak. Deborah and Barak had routed the armies of Jabin the king of Canaan and Sisera his general, so that not a man of them was left. They were swept away by 'that ancient river, the river Kishon,' and their bodies lay perishing on the earth at Endor. And again in that day of great renown for Israel, 'the day of Midian,' Gideon with three hundred men had utterly discomfited the army of 'the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east,' and their swords had been turned one against the other. Israel had taken two of their captains, Oreb and Zeeb, and had 'slain Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb;' and Gideon and his three hundred, 'when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host;' and he slew the two kings because they had slain his brethren. Thus had ever their plans been brought to ruin, who had thought to invade the

inheritance of God, and to take possession of the dwelling-place of His people.

13. O my God, make them like unto a wheel : and as the stubble before the wind ;

14. Like as the fire that burneth up the wood : and as the flame that consumeth the mountains.

15. Persecute them even so with Thy tempest : and make them afraid with Thy storm.

The wicked must ever rush to destruction, like the wheel of a battle-chariot. Their best-laid plans are but as chaff and stubble before the whirlwind. Their strength before the might of God is but as the strength of the trees of a forest when the flames have seized them, and their pride but as the mountain crag when the lightning has shivered it. Terror can be their only feeling when the storm of God's anger falls upon them.

16. Make their faces ashamed, O Lord : that they may seek Thy Name.

17. Let them be confounded and vexed ever more and more : let them be put to shame, and perish.

18. And they shall know that Thou, Whose Name is Jehovah : art only the most Highest over all the earth.

His power and majesty brings down man's strength and confounds his pride. For it is in her God that

the Church can truly glory; it is in and by themselves that her enemies will be brought to shame. When Jehoshaphat was delivered 'the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel.' So the deliverance of God's people ever is the correction and instruction of His enemies, and His righteous judgments make His name to be known and feared.

The occasion on which this joyful song or psalm was composed was, undoubtedly, the invasion of Judæa, in the reign of Jehoshaphat, by a large confederation of the nations which bordered upon it. The chiefs of this confederation seem to have been the Moabites and Ammonites, the descendants of Lot; they had drawn into it the Idumæans and the Arabian tribes who were their neighbours. The Amalekites, the old enemies of Israel, and the Philistines, with whom they were constantly at war, doubtless came readily into the league, and it would seem that mercenaries had been hired from Tyre, and that an alliance had been formed with the then distant kingdom of Assyria. In order to surprise Jerusalem, they entered Judæa by marching round the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. 2 Chron. xx. relates the pious confidence of Jehoshaphat in the protection of God, and the assurance that was given him by Jahaziel, a Levite of the sons of Asaph—who was perhaps the author of this Psalm—who by the Spirit of God bid him not to be afraid nor dismayed. In fulfilment of his prediction, the arms of the confederated nations were turned against each other, till they were mutually destroyed, and the army of Jehoshaphat had only to collect the spoil of their camp, which they were three days in doing. This Psalm was probably sung by the singers whom he placed before his army, as they marched against the enemy. In order of time, therefore, it immediately precedes Psalm xlvii. The Hagarites, a tribe of Arabians who took their name from Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, had been defeated and driven from their territory by the Reubenites, in the time of Saul (1 Chron. v. 10, 19, 20); and the Amalekites also, between whom and Israel there was an eternal feud ordained by God Himself, were finally destroyed and dispersed as a nation by the Simeonites, in the reign of Hezekiah (1 Chron. iv. 39-43). The mention, therefore, of the Amalekites proves that this Psalm was written

before the time of Hezekiah, and refers it to the confederacy against Jehoshaphat. The inhabitants of Gebal are mentioned in connection with those of Tyre in Ezekiel xxvii. 9. In verses 13, 14, 15, Hammond considers that there is but one metaphor, viz. that of stubble which is crushed by the wheel to separate the grain, and then winnowed before the wind, and lastly consumed by fire. This is simpler, but the accumulation of metaphors which our translation gives is more awful and impressive.

PSALM lxxxiv. *Quam dilecta!*

1. O how amiable are Thy dwellings : Thou Lord of hosts !

2. My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord : my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

3. Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young : even Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

The courts of the earthly temples of the Lord God of hosts and the gathering-places of His congregation are the images and emblems of His dwelling-place above, and of 'the innumerable company of angels and the general assembly of the first-born.' There are gleams of heaven ever resting upon His Churches here. As the Levite, like Elkanah of the sons of Korah, though he dwelt afar off from the tabernacle, yet was ever thinking of its beauty, and recollecting its holy melody and solemn mysteries, with longing and love, and with eager desire to return again to the dwelling of his God ; so should the Christian with still deeper longings and more

fervent soul turn to that high mansion where his Saviour dwells, and which He is busied in making ready for His redeemed. Well may He desire to depart from here and to enter there. Here is longing, there is having; here is sighing, there are rejoicings; here are prayers, there are thanksgivings; here is gloom, and there is glory! There shall the heart and flesh, the whole redeemed soul and body, exult eternally in the presence of the living God. There even now our wandering affections and restless fleeting thoughts can find their rest and home, even as in Shiloh or in Sion the sparrow dwelt within the courts of the sanctuary, and the swallow made her nest and reared her young in the pillars which stood around the altar of burnt-offerings.

4. Blessed are they that dwell in 'Thy house : they will be alway praising Thee.

Blessed are the Saints who have their dwelling there; who have once entered in and depart no more from that abode of unbroken peace! They have finished their pilgrimage, they repose from their weariness; above them, and around them, and in them, is the fulness of their Saviour's love, and their whole duty from henceforth is an Alleluia which shall be chanted on and on for ever.

5. Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee : in whose heart are Thy ways.

6. Who going through the vale of misery use it for a well : and the pools are filled with water.

Heb. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it springs.

The rain covereth it with blessings.

LXX. The Lawgiver shall give blessings.

7. They will go from strength to strength : and unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Sion.

But blessed too are they who are journeying on their way of obedience, though they be not as yet come to their rest. The weary journeys of the Israelites who came up three times in the year to the House of God are a fit image of this mortal life. The wayfarer of this world in himself is weak, but in his Lord is he strong ; he will cast from his heart his own ways—that is, his sins,—he will only keep the ways of his Saviour—the ways of wisdom, the ways of love, the ways of peace. In the valley of weeping, in the humiliation of penitence, he will find springs of refreshing and comfort ; for our Great Prophet hath long since cast of the salt of grace into the bitter fountains of human tears, and healed them. His sorrows will bring with them blessings ; and his sighs, as they go up to heaven, will draw heaven down to him. He will go on from grace to grace, onward and upward through those stages of the Christian pilgrimage, the thirty-fold, the sixty-fold, the hundred-fold ; the more deeply he loves, the more speedily will he ascend ; each station of that walk with God gives him new strength, until the journey is accomplished, and the wayfarer leaves the vale of tears to mount upward to the hill of Sion, to

abide before the face of God amid beauty which can never fade, in love which can never die.

8. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer :
hearken, O God of Jacob.

9. Behold, O God our defender : and look
upon the face of Thine Anointed.

LXX. Look upon the face of Thy Christ.

Until that time our prayers must outrun our steps, our hopes must get before ourselves. We must pray to the God of hosts to be our defender and our keeper through the perils of our road, not for our own sakes, but for His Whose we are. We must implore the God of Jacob to look upon us, not in our own meanness and poverty, but in the person of our Christ and King, Who has anointed His people with that unction of grace which was poured without measure upon Himself.

10. For one day in Thy courts : is better
than a thousand.

11. I had rather be a door-keeper in the
house of my God : than to dwell in the tents
of ungodliness.

Heb. I had rather lie at the threshold in the house of
my God.

One day spent in prayer within the earthly house of God is better than many given up to the restlessness and toil of the world. Far more shall the days of this our earthly life, however many of them there may be, be surpassed and overpaid by the day of heaven—that one day whose sun knows no rising and

no setting, which follows after no yesterday, and after which no to-morrow comes—the one day of eternity. To have but a station there, if it be but as a keeper of the door, to be anywhere there, so it be but within, or even on the threshold of that all-glorious home, is that most blessed lot, beside which the dwelling in the pavilions of sin, and the being surrounded with the curtains of wickedness, however brilliant for a time they may be, is ruin and utter loss. Oh may the All-merciful bring us there, when He will and as He will, only so that we be at the last within His threshold,—only that we be not cast out !

12. For the Lord God is a light and defence : the Lord will give grace and worship, and no good thing shall He withhold from them that live a godly life.

13. O Lord God of hosts : blessed is the man that putteth his trust in Thee.

Here the prayers of them who bear the cross are heard, their longings are supplied ; here the Giver of all goodness enlightens their mind, and defends their soul. His grace is, as it were, a sun to disperse the darkness ; His glory is, as it were, a shield to repel their foes. And if the thoughts of heaven and the messages of God comfort, and refresh, and stay the weary soul—what shall be the effects of the full possession of His joy and the entering into His ineffable presence ! There shall godliness be indeed great gain : for no one thing that is good—not His peace, not His love, not even Himself—shall He withhold

from them that live a godly life. He that hath given us His own Son, 'how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?' Blessed now in time, blessed hereafter in eternity, is he who believeth in Jesus, and longeth after Jesus, and liveth after Jesus.

This Psalm was composed by the sons of Korah, "upon Gittith," (see Psalms viii. and lxxx.) for the public service of the temple. If "Gittith" signifies either a harp or a tune invented at Gath, it is more likely to have a reference to Gath-Rimmon, which was one of the cities of the Levites, (Josb. xxi. 24,) than to Gath of the Philistines. It has been ascribed to the time of David, but it is far more likely that it was written during the reign of Hezekiah, to stir up the holy affections and pious longings of the race of Israel for the temple and the worship of their fathers. In the time of Hezekiah many out of the tribes of "Asher, and Manasseh, and of Zebulun, humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem," (2 Chron. xxx. 11). This Psalm might have been used as a pilgrimage song by the pious observers of the law, when they went up three times a-year from the more distant tribes to the House of God, as those Psalms were used which are called "the Psalms of Degrees." This journeying to the house of God could not but suggest to the thoughtful spirit the journey of man in this mortal life, and the temple of God at the holy city, and the desire to visit it, were but as emblems of the eternal temple, and the glory which is reserved for the faithful in heart. The vale of Baca in verse 7 has been supposed to be so called from a shrub which grew in it, which is still called Baca by the Arabians, and which distilled a gum like the dropping of tears; it may, perhaps, rather be that place which was called Bochim, or weeping, because the Israelites wept tears of repentance there, when they were rebuked for their sins by an angel of the Lord, (Judges ii. 1—5). In its tone of tender and yet rapturous poetry, and its spirit of the holy longing of divine love, this Psalm is much like the forty-second, which is also by the sons of Korah.

FOR CHRISTMAS-DAY.

PSALM lxxxv. *Benedixisti, Domine.*

1. LORD, Thou art become gracious unto

Thy land : Thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob.

2. Thou hast forgiven the offence of Thy people : and covered all their sins.

3. Thou hast taken away all Thy displeasure : and turned Thyself from Thy wrathful indignation.

In that bright gleam of rest, and holiness, and peace which fell upon the land of Judah in the godly reign of Hezekiah, the spirit of the prophet, while it joyed in the present, saw the future, though distant, advent of immortal grace, and truth, and light. Then God was gracious unto His land; and that graciousness was an earnest of greater grace to come. Then He spared the children of Judah from the captivity which hung over them; and that deliverance was a foreshadowing of His coming, upon Whom was to be the Spirit of the Lord, Whom He should 'anoint to preach the Gospel to the poor.' Whom He would send 'to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' He was to deliver His people from a more hopeless than Assyrian bondage, even 'the captivity of the law of sin.' But how should He deliver them from this captivity? By forgiving their offence and covering their sin. Pardon would break the chain of sin. He was to 'take away the sin of the world.' The spotlessness of His innocence was to cover the ini-

quity of their guilt. In Him was the Father pleased; and through His intercession was man again brought near to the God Whose commandments He had broken.

4. Turn us then, O God our Saviour : and let Thine anger cease from us.

5. Wilt Thou be displeased at us for ever : and wilt Thou stretch out Thy wrath from one generation to another ?

6. Wilt Thou not turn again, and quicken us : that Thy people may rejoice in Thee ?

Then God our Saviour turned Himself to us, and turned us to Him. His anger was quenched in pity at our lost estate. The weakness of the flesh, the torture of pain, the house of poverty, the chain of death, the snare of temptation—these were the bitter tokens of that captivity into which we fell when we displeased our God. But His displeasure was not for ever, it extended not through all the generations of our existence : one indeed, our first and natural generation, was made mortal by His wrath, but the second was made immortal by His mercy. Yea, God turned Himself to man yet again the second time to give him life, and not only life, but grace, and not only grace, but joy. When man rejoiced in himself, he turned from God; but when God turned to man, then could he rejoice in his Saviour.

7. Shew us Thy mercy, O Lord : and grant us Thy salvation.

Dim-sighted as we are, we must ask our Father to shew us His mercy, which we cannot see of ourselves ; —poor as we are, we must beg Him to grant us His salvation, which we cannot possess of ourselves. But what is both the shewing of His mercy and the granting of His salvation, but the coming to us of Jesus Christ the Saviour, Who was made man for us ! Therefore does the Church keep, as it were, a perpetual advent—therefore is she always on the watch for the appearing of Incarnate Love—therefore would she have the prayer daily on her children's lips, ' O Lord, shew Thy mercy upon us, And grant us Thy salvation.'

8. I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me : for He shall speak peace unto His people, and to His saints, that they turn not again.

As when an earthly sovereign makes a proclamation of peace, all to whom it is made listen to it in silence and attention, so on the first Christmas-day all nature was hushed in solemn and perfect stillness to hearken to what God said concerning us by the voice of His angel-heralds, when they proclaimed, ' Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.' So must we ever hearken, like a prophet waiting for the inspiration of the Spirit, in reverence and awe, to those words of peace and love which He speaks to His own elect, when He would have them forsake their folly and their guilt, and turn not to the sins they had repented of.

9. For His salvation is nigh them that fear Him : that glory may dwell in our land.

Then salvation, even Christ Himself, the Saviour, came nigh to us, even among us. He manifested Himself and His glory to them that believed on Him, even here in this earth of ours. 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.'

10. Mercy and truth are met together : righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

11. Truth shall flourish out of the earth : and righteousness hath looked down from heaven.

Then mercy and peace, and truth and righteousness, which had parted at the fall of man in paradise, met together again at the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. Then divine Mercy brought the gift of pardon for sinning man, and Truth met her, and confessed its fulness and its perfectness. Then Peace offered a full satisfaction for our guilt, and Justice received it at her hands, and was gladly reconciled. Yes, without a parable, in the spotless Child of Mary does all that is merciful, and all that is true, and all that is peaceable, and all that is righteous, meet in the perfect union of perfect God with perfect man. Then did truth spring out of the earth in Him Who was the Word made flesh, and righteousness looked

down from heaven in the eternal Father, Who sent unto us His beloved Son.

12. Yea, the Lord shall shew loving-kindness : and our land shall give her increase.

13. Righteousness shall go before Him : and He shall direct His going in the way.

For it was in His bringing down Himself that message of love which He had to give us,—it was in His coming among us and being with us and one with us,—it was in His taking upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh and the doom of a sinful nature, while yet He was without all spot of sin,—that ‘the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared.’ He took the curse from us and was made a curse for us. This earth we live on was cursed for our sake with thorns ; it is blessed for His sake Who was crowned with thorns. Like the earth, our hearts were barren, but He has made them fruitful by His grace. Oh, follow we Him!—for righteousness goes before Him, as once the Baptist went before Him to make ready His way ; and He in holiness, and patience, and love has measured with His pierced-through feet each step of this toilsome and weary life, even unto death, that He might guide us with His footsteps to where He is. From Bethlehem to Calvary He has ‘directed His going in the way’ of humiliation, that we might follow Him from Olivet to heaven in the way of glory.

The subject and spirit of this Psalm render it a fit hymn of praise to be used on the Nativity of Christ, for which festival the Church has

appointed it. It was intended to be sung in the temple-service, as its title is, "To the Chief Musician, a Psalm by the sons of Korah." It was very probably composed by one of the Levites of the family of Korah, at the period of that happy revival of religious earnestness and obedience to the law which took place in the reign of Hezekiah, and which, following as it did upon the impiety and idolatry of his father, must have filled all true-hearted men with deep gratitude to God, Who had by His providence brought it about. A deep and beautiful commentary on the latter part of this Psalm will be found in the eleventh sermon on the Nativity, of the thoughtful and saint-like Bp. Andrewes.

Morning Prayer.

PSALM lxxxvi. *Inclina, Domine.*

1. Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, and hear me : for I am poor, and in misery.

2. Preserve Thou my soul, for I am holy : my God, save Thy servant that putteth his trust in Thee.

Like one fainting and unable to raise himself begs him who would relieve him to bend down his ear, that he may hear the words which he scarce has strength to speak ; so man in his poverty and misery implores the Father of compassion to hear his prayer. He asks God to keep him, because he belongs to God ; he confesses that he is not his own, but is devoted and offered up to his Lord, and sanctified by His Holy Spirit, therefore he prays for grace and salvation, and trusts only to Him Whose he is, to hear and grant his prayer.

3. Be merciful unto me, O Lord : for I will call daily upon Thee.

4. Comfort the soul of Thy servant : for unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

5. For Thou, Lord, art good and gracious : and of great mercy unto all them that call upon Thee.

He would ask for daily mercy, as he needs it for daily sin. He lifts up his soul from the want and sorrow of earth for comfort to that Lord of life and love, of goodness and of grace, Who ever is ready to give to all them that call upon Him for mercy.

6. Give ear, Lord, unto my prayer : and ponder the voice of my humble desires.

7. In the time of my trouble I will call upon Thee : for Thou hearest me.

8. Among the gods there is none like unto Thee, O Lord : there is not one that can do as Thou doest.

It is to God only that man must make his prayer, it is to God only that man must seek in trouble ; for it is God only that can hear him. There is no creature, be it angel or man, who can comfort us with mercy and grant us salvation, but God only. 'For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, as there be gods many, and lords many, but to us there is but one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him ;

and one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him.'

9. All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship Thee, O Lord : and shall glorify Thy Name.

10. For Thou art great, and doest wondrous things : Thou art God alone.

To Him Who hath made all, and to Him Who hath redeemed all, shall all nations come; and he that cometh shall in no wise be cast out. 'His house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.' He Who is the Father of all would have all come to Him, in Him and through Him Who is the beloved Son. In Christ is the greatness of His mercy and the wondrousness of His salvation shewn to the peoples of the world. He with the Father is God alone, for He said, 'I and My Father are One.'

11. Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in Thy truth : O knit my heart unto Thee, that I may fear Thy Name.

All ways are indifferent to him who is journeying towards heaven; he only asks for that which will bring him most speedily to his home. He does not seek to walk in the pleasantest, but in the safest and the shortest, and that is the way of the Cross. There is one Who is our guide, Who is Himself the way; One Who is our teacher, Who is Himself the truth: if we 'distrust not the fear of the Lord, and come not unto Him with a double heart;' if our souls be

joined to Him Who first loved us, His grace will bring us into that right way, the way of faith and holy fear.

12. I will thank Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart : and will praise Thy Name for evermore.

13. For great is Thy mercy toward me : and Thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell.

To God, Who giveth us forgiveness, what can we return but thankfulness—the thankfulness of an undivided heart, and the unending praise of a soul redeemed? For in the greatness of His mercy He has delivered our soul from sin, from death, the fruit of sin, and from hell, the end of sin—from hell, the nethermost and deepest, where men are twice dead, where soul and body are delivered into ‘the bitter pains of eternal death.’

14. O God, the proud are risen against me : and the congregations of naughty men have sought after my soul, and have not set Thee before their eyes.

Poor and miserable as we are, we are surrounded with innumerable dangers, and with hosts of enemies. The evil spirits who fell through pride are risen against us; he is our tempter who was the tempter of our Lord. To these dangers are added the temptations of this present evil world, and the

violence or the influence of the assemblies of the wicked, who look only to their own will, and care not for the will of God.

15. But Thou, O Lord God, art full of compassion and mercy : long-suffering, plentiful in goodness and truth.

16. O turn Thee then unto me, and have mercy upon me : give Thy strength unto Thy servant, and help the son of Thine handmaid.

17. Shew some token upon me for good, that they who hate me may see it, and be ashamed : because Thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

Infinite are the provocations of man against his Maker, and yet infinite are the mercy and patience, the goodness and truth of Almighty God, in bearing with them. We may after all our trespasses implore Him to turn to us in mercy, and to give us strength and succour, because we are His, because we belong to Him as His servants, and have been new-born to do His will in His Church. Therefore may we ask for grace to worthily receive His Sacraments, and humbly come to Him for those 'sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace, and His good-will towards us,' by which the power and craft of our foes may be defeated, and we may be helped in our trials and comforted in our sorrows.

This is "a Prayer of David," written most probably in the latter

part of his life. It contains many expressions which have occurred already in those Psalms which David wrote. Its words of earnest prayer would be found full of comfort by Hezekiah and his people, both in their repentance and in the dangers which came upon them.

PSALM lxxxvii. *Fundamenta ejus.*

1. HER foundations are upon the holy hills : the Lord loveth the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

Heb. His foundations are in the holy mountains.

The foundations of that city which God has built for Himself, and which He calls His own, are indeed upon the holy mountains. The Lord of heaven chose one country out of all countries, and one city out of all its cities, and one hill out of all its hills, to be holy to Himself; and this as being a shadow and type of His heavenly city. The earthly Jerusalem was built upon Sion and Moriah; the heavenly Jerusalem was 'built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head corner-stone.' He is the saint of saints, and the foundation of foundations. The foundations of Sion were set upon the mountains, her beauty was seen from afar off; so is the Church exalted to be the light of the world, a 'city set upon a hill which cannot be hid.' There are twelve gates to that eternal city, and yet but one entrance; for the twelve Apostles, and the doctrine which they proclaimed unto the world, are one in Christ. The gates of Sion are the doctrines of the Gospel, the

tabernacles of Jacob are the teachings of the law ; the law was accomplished in the Gospel ; therefore it is said that the Lord loveth the gates of Sion more than the dwellings of Jacob.

2. Very excellent things are spoken of thee : thou city of God.

Glorious things were said of the earthly Jerusalem ; she was called the beautiful city, and the joy of the earth. She was crowned with the temple of her God, and the glory of His presence dwelt within her. But if excellent things were spoken of the shadow and the figure, what shall be said of the reality and the truth ! The earthly city fell, and the shadow passed away. The spiritual city abideth for ever ; its building is begun on earth and completed in heaven, it standeth for the ages of eternity ; and there is 'no temple therein ; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it ;' and it has 'no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it : for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.'

3. I will think upon Rahab and Babylon : with them that know me.

4. Behold ye the Philistines also : and they of Tyre, with the Morians ; lo, there was He born.

5. And of Sion it shall be reported that He was born in her : and the most High shall stablish her.

Heb. I will announce Rahab and Babylon
Amongst them who acknowledge Me.
Behold Philistia, and Tyre, and Cush :
This one was born there.
And of Sion it shall be said,
This man and this man is born in her :
And He establishes her Who is the most High.

God Himself proclaims her glory, when He declares that Egypt and Babylon shall be among those who confess His Name. For this is the glory of the Church, that into her the fulness of the nations shall enter,—the proud from Egypt, who for her haughtiness is called Rahab,—the worldly from Babylon, the city of confusion,—the wrathful from Philistia, so long the enemies of Israel,—the covetous from Tyre, the rich city of the traders,—and the slaves of ignorance from Cush, and from the land of Ham,—all these shall learn the love of Christ and confess His truth, and shall enter into that all-glorious city, and be admitted and acknowledged as citizens of the celestial Sion. Each one, whatever be his nation, who is born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, is born within the walls of the new Jerusalem, ‘which is the mother of us all.’ Her glory shall not pass away. The eternal God hath established His Church for ever; He will enlarge her gates and multiply her children, and will be with her always, even to the end.

6. The Lord shall rehearse it when He writeth up the people : that He was born there.

Heb. The Lord shall count in the writing down of the nations,

This one was born there.

LXX. The Lord shall declare it in the enrolment of the people and the princes,
Of them who have been born in her.

To be enrolled in the number of her citizens is to be written in the book of life; therefore all the elect of God, 'whose names are written in heaven,' shall be counted to be born in her. 'One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.' And greatest and most glorious of all, He shall be counted among her citizens Who was her Builder and Creator. Unto her a child was born—the Child of Mary; unto her a son was given—the Son of God. Yea, it shall be said even of Him Whose goings forth were from everlasting, 'This Man was born there.'

7. The singers also and trumpeters shall He rehearse : All my fresh springs shall be in thee.

Heb. Singing and dancing. they shall say,
All my fountains of joy are in thee.

As the Church shall glory in the redeemed, so shall the redeemed rejoice in the Church, and in Christ, Who is her Spouse and King. For it is He Who hath written the names of His saints in that book which is the Book of Life. Filled with immortal gladness, they shall own in the songs of heaven, that

the fountains of grace which refreshed their earthly pilgrimage, and the well-spring of glory which is opened to them in eternity, flowed to them from Him through the channel of His body, even His Church.

This is "a joyful Psalm by the sons of Korah," in which, St. Athanasius declares, they foretel the calling of the Gentiles, and the future revealing of the Only-begotten to the Church in the mystery of the Incarnation. The words of the Psalm in itself are somewhat obscure and difficult. It was possibly written in the reign of Hezekiah, when the enemies of Jerusalem were defeated and driven back, and the neighbouring nations heard of the glory of Jerusalem and brought presents. It seems to describe the eagerness with which the various nations of the world would desire to acknowledge the God of Israel, and to have their names enrolled as citizens of Sion. (Compare Isa. iv. 3; xlv. 5; xlv. 14; lx. 4.)

FOR GOOD-FRIDAY.

PSALM lxxxviii. *Domine Deus.*

1. O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before Thee : O let my prayer enter into Thy presence, incline Thine ear unto my calling.

Christ our Lord in His agony and death prayed to the Almighty Father in that form of man in which He suffered. He cried to Him in the day of His passion upon the Cross of Calvary, and in the night of His bitter agony in the garden of Gethsemane; yea, His whole life was one long passion, and one long prayer. His prayer entered into His Father's presence, and was accepted by Him; He inclined His ear unto the Son of Man, and heard Him in His mercy.

2. For my soul is full of trouble : and my life draweth nigh unto hell.

By prayer He strengthened Himself to bear the Cross, in that dark and terrible hour, when in the garden He was sore amazed and very heavy, and in which He said, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.' He emptied Himself of glory, that He might be full of trouble. His soul, which was free from human sin, was full of human troubles, that we who are full of sin might be free from trouble; His life drew nigh to the terrors of the unseen world, that we might not be its spoil and prey.

3. I am counted as one of them that go down into the pit : and I have been even as a man that hath no strength.

4. Free among the dead, like unto them that are wounded, and lie in the grave : who are out of remembrance, and are cut away from Thy hand.

The Son of God was found in fashion as a man; He humbled Himself and was obedient to death, even the death of the Cross. Sinless in His nature, He was treated as a sinner; eternal in His existence, He was condemned to die; infinite in His power, He was counted as one of them that go down into the pit. 'When we were yet without strength,' He was made as we are, and died for the ungodly. Almighty, He became weak; the Lord of

angels, He was left helpless; the Saviour of the world, it was said of Him, 'He saved others, Himself He cannot save.' Free from the sins of mortality, He yet entered into the prison-house of the dead; wounded even unto death, in the hands, and in the feet, and in the heart, He was taken down from the cross and laid within the sepulchre, even like a sinner whom God has forgotten, like a child of man who dies and returns to the earth, when he is separated from the hand of God which holds us all in life.

5. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit : in a place of darkness, and in the deep.

Christ our Lord descended into hell. The Son of Man was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. His body was laid within the sepulchre; His soul descended into those deep abodes of the unseen world which had been hitherto full of gloom and fearfulness, until His glory shone amid their mournful shadows. How He descended, whither He went, and what work He wrought there, we may not dare to guess; but this we know—that wherever He went in His descending into the unseen world, almighty mercy was His guide, and almighty love His companion. He Who was the Redeemer in the manger and on the Cross, could not but be the Redeemer even in the grave.

6. Thine indignation lieth hard upon me : and Thou hast vexed me with all Thy storms.

7. Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me : and made me to be abhorred of them.

8. I am so fast in prison : that I cannot get forth.

‘The Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.’ The wrath which our sins called forth fell upon Him : ‘He was made sin for us Who knew no sin.’ The waters of that baptism of death rolled over Him in all their bitterness and depth. And He suffered alone ; ‘His disciples forsook Him and fled :’ Peter, the most zealous of the Apostles, denied Him with an oath,—‘I know not the man.’ While He was dying upon the Cross, ‘all His acquaintance stood afar off.’ His Father and God seemed to have forsaken Him. And when His sacred body was laid within the tomb, His enemies sealed the stone and set a watch, and made it as sure as they could. Yet all these things He suffered by the all-wise and eternal decrees of God. In our feeble lives, we seem to do many things by chance and many by necessity ; but what necessity could force the power of the Son of God, or what could His wisdom do by chance ? All that Christ did, all that He spake, all that He suffered—His prayer, His agony, His death, His burial, His descent into hell—were by His own will and determined by His almighty love.

9. My sight faileth for very trouble : Lord, I have called daily upon Thee, I have stretched forth my hands unto Thee.

His sight grew dim as He drew near to death ; yet though His eyes failed Him, His prayers failed not. Still both in life and in death He stretched out His hands upon the accursed tree, pleading ever for His people, both as a living Sacrifice and as a dying Priest.

10. Dost Thou shew wonders among the dead : or shall the dead rise up again, and praise Thee ?

Heb. Wilt Thou do wonders to the dead ;
Or shall the Rephaim stand up and praise Thee ?

11. Shall Thy loving-kindness be shewed in the grave : or Thy faithfulness in destruction ?

12. Shall Thy wondrous works be known in the dark : and Thy righteousness in the land where all things are forgotten ?

The limits of this world are the bounds of our power, and our vision extends not beyond the light of this world ; but what can bound the mightiness of God or the love of Christ ? His wonders were shewn among the dead : the light of His glory shone ‘in the chambers of souls :’ the spirits who had descended to that dark prison-house of the unseen world, the souls of the giants and the mighty ones who lived before the flood, and who died in their pride and sin, were visited, Holy Scripture seems to tell us, by the soul of Christ. ‘He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit : by Which also

He went and preached unto the spirits in prison ; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.' His love went beyond this life : He Who was King of all was King also of the grave, and in the very shadow of death He gave to the repenting thief the merciful assurance, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.' His soul went to the land of spirits, His body rested in the grave, and yet but for a little space ; He rose again and departed from that dwelling of forgetfulness, and by His marvellous resurrection He gave an earnest and a faithful pledge that all should hereafter rise again ; that His wonders should yet again be displayed in the dark region of Hades, and that His righteousness should summon the bodies of His sleeping saints to stand up and come forth from the graves in which they lie forgotten and unknown by man, but remembered by their God.

13. Unto Thee have I cried, O Lord : and early shall my prayer come before Thee.

And this crowning marvel of the universe will be wrought by the merits of His sacrifice and the virtue of His unceasing intercession Who for us rose again early in the morning of the third day, that we might rise through Him and in Him.

14. Lord, why abhorrest Thou my soul : and hidest Thou Thy face from me ?

15. I am in misery, and like unto him that

is at the point to die : even from my youth up Thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind.

16. Thy wrathful displeasure goeth over me : and the fear of Thee hath undone me.

The curse of sin was laid upon the Saviour, though He were sinless; and the face of God was turned from Him at the last, and He was left in darkness Who was the Light of Light. In the last day of His passion Christ bore the Cross upon His shoulders, but all His life long He had borne it in His heart. His life in this world of death had been a living death. Like the children of Israel suffered terror and misery in the brick-kilns and the prisons of Egypt, so had He, even from His youth, when Herod sought to slay Him, been surrounded with hatred and danger; so that the word of the prophet, which was spoken of Israel, was fulfilled in Him—‘Out of Egypt have I called My Son.’ But in the last hours of His life on earth the sense of the displeasure and wrath of God against sin and evil, which had all through His life oppressed His soul, came with doubled weight, and pierced His sinless spirit with sharper agony and suffering.

17. They came round about me daily like water : and compassed me together on every side.

18. My lovers and friends hast Thou put away from me : and hid mine acquaintance out of my sight.

The sins of all mankind came round Him like the waves of a dark and boundless ocean, and on this side and on that there was no escape but through the gate of death. He was left alone in that deep of woe, for none could, if they would, have come near Him to aid Him or to bear His passion with Him; and none would, if they could; for even His disciples, whom He had loved unto the end, forsook Him. We men for whom He was dying, hid, as it were, our faces from Him. All around Him was darkness,—the darkness of the hidden sun before His eyes, and the darkness of sin and the gloom of death before His soul. His body hung on the cross between heaven and earth, as though He were an outcast of both. ‘For us men and for our salvation He suffered and was buried.’ ‘He descended into hell.’

The title of this awful and mournful Psalm is “A Song or Psalm of the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, a Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite.” There are several persons of the name of Heman mentioned in Holy Scripture. This Psalm has been sometimes ascribed to Heman the Levite, who is called also a Seer, and is spoken of as being the chief musician of a choir with Asaph and Jeduthun in the time of David, (1 Chron. xxv. 5, 6). But the Heman to whom the title ascribes this Psalm was an Ezrahite, or a descendant of Zerah, the son of Judah. “The sons of Zerah were Zimri, and Ethan, and *Heman*, and Calcol, and Dara,” (1 Chron. ii. 6); and these grandsons of Judah appear to have been renowned for their wisdom and mental power, for it is said of Solomon, (1 Kings iv. 31,) “He was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol.” If, therefore, the Heman of this Psalm were Heman the son of Zerah,—and this was the opinion of St. Athanasius and Eusebius among the ancients, and of Lightfoot and other moderns,—it was written by him during the captivity of the Israelites in Egypt. Both the expressions of the Psalm and its general tone, which is full of sorrow and misery of heart, agree with its being written at that time. The words “Maha-

lath Leannoth," though they have been interpreted to signify "singing in alternate choirs," or "to be sung to the flute," yet, as their most probable meaning is "the sickness or misery of the oppressions," fall in with this view. We may suppose, then, that this Instruction of Heman the son of Zerah, the son of Judah, was written in the time of the sufferings of Israel in Egypt, that it was preserved among the hymns of the sons of Korah, and that previous to or during the reign of Hezekiah, it was adapted by them to the public service of the Temple. It is appointed by the Church for Good Friday, and has been generally interpreted as spiritually prophetic of the passion and death and descent into hell of our blessed Redeemer.

The word which in verse 2 is rendered "Hell" in the Prayer-book translation, and "the grave" in the Bible version, and which is usually translated either as Hell or the grave, is in the Hebrew "*Sheol*," and in the Greek "*Hades*." *Hades* signifies "the unseen world." The word *Sheol* is literally "the Devouring, or the Insatiable." (Compare Habak. ii. 5, "who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied;" and also Prov. xxx. 15, 16.) *Sheol* seems to have presented itself to the thoughts of the ancient Hebrews as a gloomy, silent, inevitable, and mysterious abode, situated within the earth, whither the souls of the departed were compelled to repair and to dwell, upon their being separated from the body. (Isa. xiv. 9—20.) They believed that the spirits of all human kind were contained there in a state of waiting, and there especially dwelt the souls of the giants before the flood, (1 Pet. iii. 19, 20,) and of the great ones of old, the *Rephaim*, whom they pictured to themselves as fearful and gigantic spectres. (Compare Prov. ii. 18.) These ideas became modified and developed with the increasing clearness of divine teaching; and they divided the abode of the dead into different states of hope and comfort, which they called Abraham's bosom and Paradise, (St. Luke xvi. 22, 23; xxiii. 43); and of misery and suffering, (Wisdom iii. 1). Life and immortality were brought to light by the Saviour, and also judgment and Hell—the *Gehenna* of everlasting punishment, as distinguished from the Unseen World. (Compare Rev. xx. 13, 14.) From these speculations of Jewish Rabbis respecting *Sheol* the Church of Rome appears to have developed the doctrine of Purgatory. It should be added that it was a received opinion among the followers of Rabbinical teaching, that all of the seed of Abraham, though they would be dwellers in *Sheol* before the general resurrection, would finally escape the *Gehenna* of everlasting fire. The Rich man (St. Luke xvi. 23) is in *Hades* in torments when he calls to Abraham his father.

Evening Prayer.

FOR CHRISTMAS-DAY.

PSALM lxxxix. *Misericordias Domini.*

1. My song shall be alway of the loving-kindness of the Lord : with my mouth will I ever be shewing Thy truth from one generation to another.

The love of God in the incarnation of His Son is that which must always call forth our praise and thankfulness. His truth revealed in Christ will be the theme of our songs not only in this world, but in the world hereafter.

2. For I have said, Mercy shall be set up for ever : Thy truth shalt Thou stablish in the heavens.

3. I have made a covenant with My chosen : I have sworn unto David My servant ;

4. Thy seed will I stablish for ever : and set up thy throne from one generation to another.

He has told us, and through faith in Him we know and are sure, that His mercy will never fail : we can plead before Him that His promises are like the heavens which He has built, wide and lofty, but enduring and strong. In this stedfast mercy and eternal truth did He make a covenant with His chosen servant David, and promised that his seed

should sit upon his throne, not merely for a few generations, but for ever, in a kingdom which should never end. His voice of consolation to His people is, 'I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.'

5. O Lord, the very heavens shall praise Thy wondrous works : and Thy truth in the congregation of the saints.

Heb. And the saints Thy faithfulness in the congregation.

6. For who is he among the clouds : that shall be compared unto the Lord ?

7. And what is he among the gods : that shall be like unto the Lord ?

This covenant was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the son of David, at whose birth the heavens burst into music, and the multitude of the heavenly host praised God for that Christ the Lord was incarnate in Bethlehem, the city of David; while His saints, from Simeon and Anna down unto the time when the number of His elect shall be accomplished, confess their trust in His truth and faithfulness, and repeat on earth the songs of heaven. He came into this lower world veiling the glory of the Godhead in mortal flesh, but yet even in His humiliation above all. None among created beings are to be compared to the Son of God, whether prophets, or apostles, or saints, though they be His 'great cloud of witnesses;' none of the angels, or virtues, or powers of heaven, however bright or high, are like unto Him,

for 'He is made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.'

8. God is very greatly to be feared in the council of the saints : and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about Him.

9. O Lord God of hosts, who is like unto Thee : Thy truth, most mighty Lord, is on every side.

He shall come with clouds, and all shall see Him ; and His saints, who on earth have 'served Him with reverence and godly fear,' shall be caught up to meet Him in the air : but they who shall be caught up to the clouds shall worship Him Who cometh in the clouds, glorious, and wonderful, and terrible in His power and in His judgments, in that awful day. Then shall He be had in reverence by the assembled universe of angels and of men, Who is Lord of all, both of angels and of men, and His truth shall drive away for ever the darkness of ignorance, or error, and of falsehood, and shall shine, like His glory, round about Him, through all created worlds.

10. Thou rulest the raging of the sea : Thou stillest the waves thereof when they arise.

11. Thou hast subdued Egypt, and destroyed it : Thou hast scattered Thine enemies abroad with Thy mighty arm.

Heb. Thou shalt subdue Rahab as one that is wounded.

12. The heavens are Thine, the earth also is Thine : Thou hast laid the foundation of the round world, and all that therein is.

13. Thou hast made the north and the south : Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy Name.

He Who came as a little child to the manger of Bethlehem, was that same Who saith to the sea from the beginning, 'So far shalt thou come, and no farther;' and Who spake in after-time to the waves and to the winds on the lake of Galilee, saying, 'Peace, be still!' He it was Who had struck down Pharaoh from his pride, and had scattered the hosts of Egypt in the Red Sea. He had created in the beginning the heavens and the earth; and the world and all that is in it, its vastness, its order, its fertility, its living things, were called into being by His word, and are continued by His care. The north and the south, the snowy cliffs of Lebanon, and the parched deserts of Arabia, the height of Hermon in the east of Jordan, near which He was baptized, and Tabor, the mount of transfiguration, on the west, are His, for He made them, and unto Him they owe whatever of grandeur, or of beauty, or of holiness they have. He hath made all things in His wisdom, and He will fill them with His love.

14. Thou hast a mighty arm : strong is Thy hand, and high is Thy right hand.

15. Righteousness and equity are the habi-

tation of Thy seat : mercy and truth shall go before Thy face.

Yea, mighty is the arm of the Lord, the Eternal Word—strong is ‘the power of His Christ’—whether His hand be forming the worlds in the beginning, or upholding them in their order, or swathed in swaddling bands in the cave of Bethlehem, or stretched out upon the cross of Calvary, or raised to bless His elect as He ascendeth from Olivet. And mighty shall it still be found, when He shall sit upon the throne of justice and of judgment, while mercy and truth shall go before Him, like His angel-messengers, to summon the world into His presence.

16. Blessed is the people, O Lord, that can rejoice in Thee : they shall walk in the light of Thy countenance.

Heb. Blessed are the people that know the sound of joy.

17. Their delight shall be daily in Thy Name : and in Thy righteousness shall they make their boast.

18. For Thou art the glory of their strength : and in Thy loving-kindness Thou shalt lift up our horns.

19. For the Lord is our defence : the Holy One of Israel is our King.

Blessed are they who have heard the proclamation of the coming of the incarnate Word,—‘Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, Which is Christ the Lord;’ and blessed are they who go

even unto Bethlehem, and ‘see this thing which is come to pass.’ In His light they walk through this world of darkness ; in His Name do they day by day rejoice even in this world’s sorrow ; in His righteousness can they securely rest in this world’s evil. Their Lord is their strength, and in His love, so wondrously shewn forth, is their power and pride. The confession of the Only-begotten of the Father is their defence against the power of the Evil One, and the ground of their confidence will ever be that they are subjects, not of sin or of death, but of the King of the worlds, the Holy One of Israel, Who is the Holy One of God.

20. Thou spakest sometime in visions unto Thy saints, and saidst : I have laid help upon one that is mighty ; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.

21. I have found David My servant : with My holy oil have I anointed him.

22. My hand shall hold him fast : and My arm shall strengthen him.

23. The enemy shall not be able to do him violence : the son of wickedness shall not hurt him.

24. I will smite down his foes before his face : and plague them that hate him.

25. My truth also and My mercy shall be with him : and in My Name shall his horn be exalted.

26. I will set his dominion also in the sea : and his right hand in the floods.

By Samuel the seer was David anointed to be king over Israel; and by Nathan the prophet was the promise confirmed to him that his seed should reign after him: David purposed to build a house for the ark of God; 'and it came to pass that same night that the word of the Lord came to Nathan, Now, therefore, thus shalt thou say unto My servant David, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel: and I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. Also I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, and as since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel. Moreover, I will subdue all their enemies. Furthermore, I tell thee that the Lord will build thee an house. And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build Me an house, and I will stablish his throne for ever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him

with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men. And I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee : but I will settle him in Mine house and in My kingdom for ever ; and his throne shall be established for evermore. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.'

27. He shall call me, Thou art my Father : my God, and my strong salvation.

28. And I will make him My firstborn : higher than the kings of the earth.

29. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore : and My covenant shall stand fast with him.

30. His seed also will I make to endure for ever : and his throne as the days of heaven.

To David and to his seed were these promises made : but there has been but one Who could unlock them, and take to Himself their inmost fulness, that is, ' He that hath the key of David.' To Whom also hath the unseen and glorious God ever said, ' I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son ?' Who else hath ever prayed as He prayed— ' Now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was ?' He alone was ' the Only-begotten of the Father ;' He alone was ' the First begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth : ' with Him had the Father made an everlasting cove-

nant : none could take His elect out of His hand : His kingdom should have no end.

31. But if his children forsake My law : and walk not in My judgments ;

32. If they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments : I will visit their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges.

33. Nevertheless, My loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him : nor suffer My truth to fail.

If the children of David sinned, as sin they did, forsaking His worship like Solomon, polluting His temple like Ahaz, despising His warnings like Jehoiakim, then were they to be scourged with the rod of men, with afflictions, and desolations, and captivity, to be chastened for their iniquity, and visited for their guilt. Yet in all, He Who punished in His anger could remember mercy, and would not suffer His promise to miss of its fulfilment. And in like manner would it be with the seed of the Son of David, the people of Christ's Church.

34. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips : I have sworn once by My holiness, that I will not fail David.

35. His seed shall endure for ever : and his seat is like as the sun before Me.

36. He shall stand fast for evermore as the moon : and as the faithful witness in heaven.

God hath sworn, Who cannot change or repent, and He hath sworn by that which is unchangeable—His own immortal holiness—that He will not break or change His covenant unto the second David. All things in heaven which are bright and lasting shall be but emblems of that unbroken covenant : the sun, the type of the Lord Himself ; the moon, the picture of His Church ; the rainbow, the sign of peace and rest ; which was a witness once to Noah, and shall be a witness to all eternity, as it spans the Redeemer's throne, of a world reconciled, and pardoned, and blest.

37. But Thou hast abhorred and forsaken Thine anointed : and art displeased at him.

38. Thou hast broken the covenant of Thy servant : and cast his crown to the ground.

39. Thou hast overthrown all his hedges : and broken down his strong holds.

40. All they that go by spoil him : and he is become a reproach to his neighbours.

41. Thou hast set up the right hand of his enemies : and made all his adversaries to rejoice.

42. Thou hast taken away the edge of his sword : and givest him not victory in the battle.

43. Thou hast put out his glory : and cast his throne down to the ground.

44. The days of his youth hast Thou shortened : and covered him with dishonour.

But in David's children, in Judah and her kings, these blessings were not fulfilled. The fulfilment was taken from David, that it might be found in Christ. The priesthood and the kingship of Israel were lost after the law was forsaken, notwithstanding their anointing, for God was displeased at them. They had broken their covenant, and therefore God brake it too. Their crown was cast away. The hedges of the vineyard of Judah were broken down ; their temple was destroyed ; their altars overthrown ; the heathen took their spoils ; their enemies discomfited them in battle ; they were made outcasts from their land ; and scattered abroad. Trouble and defeat, death and shame, became their portion.

45. Lord, how long wilt Thou hide Thyself, for ever : and shall Thy wrath burn like fire ?

46. O remember how short my time is : wherefore hast Thou made all men for nought ?

47. What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death : and shall he deliver his soul from the hand of hell ?

All these things they suffered, and Christ came not. The anger of their God was hot against them, and their Intercessor was still hiding Himself. Man's life is but short, and, apart from the true Life, he

seems but to live in vain. Of himself he has no rescue from the grave; death and the shadowy land of spirits wait for him, and he cannot save his soul from their fearful grasp. He only Who delivered His own soul from the hand of hell, can deliver them who believe in Him.

48. Lord, where are Thy old loving-kindnesses : which Thou swarest unto David in Thy truth ?

49. Remember, Lord, the rebuke that Thy servants have : and how I do bear in my bosom the rebukes of many people ;

50. Wherewith Thine enemies have blasphemed Thee, and slandered the footsteps of Thine anointed :

At length the oath sworn to David was fulfilled : ‘ God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ The Anointed came hiding His glory, laying aside His crown, clothed with weakness, and bearing the offences of many. But they who had been waiting for Him knew Him not ; they did to Him, their Friend, as their enemies had done to them : ‘ the days of His youth they shortened, and covered Him with dishonour.’ They defiled His face with spitting ; they wounded His heart with rebukes and scorn ; they blasphemed the Son of God, and slandered Christ their Saviour. They ‘ spake evil of that way’ which

is the following in His steps. Yet through all were the mighty counsels of Almighty mercy wrought out; for the sin of man, though it bring down chastisement upon himself, cannot make void the eternal purpose of God's long-enduring love.

Praised be the Lord for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

Therefore must man, weak and erring as he is, strive to join his voice to that of the angels, who sang praise in the vale of Bethlehem. Let us praise the Son of God, 'the Lord of glory,' for His grace! He saved us for no reward; He heeded not our vileness; He sought us out when we looked not for Him; He redeemed us from the bondage of the Evil one; He drew us near unto Himself. He is 'the Amen, the faithful and true witness.' To Him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, be ascribed all praise and glory, not in time only, but for evermore. Amen. So be it.

The title of this Psalm is "A Maschil or Instruction of Ethan the Ezrahite." Ethan, the son of Zerah, was the brother of that Herman who has been supposed to be the writer of the preceding Psalm, but while the internal evidence of that Psalm was in favour of that supposition, in the case of this one so early an authorship is altogether out of the question. Ethan was a common name among the Levites, and an Ethan was the head of the choir of Merari (1 Chron. vi. 4†). In this case the word Ezrahite must be taken in the sense of a stranger or sojourner, though it may also mean a Levite who dwelt among the Ezrahites of the tribe of Judah. The LXX. read "Israelite" for "Ezrahite." The Psalm was composed, it is supposed by Dr. Kennicott, as a national prayer, during the distress which Judah suffered under the combined invasion of Rezin the king of Syria and

Pekah king of Israel. The literal and historical meaning of this Psalm is sufficiently plain, but the spiritual and prophetic meaning is far more difficult to disentangle. The greater number of the Jewish Rabbis own it to be prophetic of the Messiah; the fathers all agree in the same judgment, and yet it is not easy to shew where the literal meaning is to give way to the spiritual meaning, they are both so blended together. It would appear that the writer was inspired to offer a prophetic prayer for the coming of that Anointed One Who was to be the King of Israel, and that his spirit was awakened, and his intercession was called forth by the troubles and distresses of the time in which he lived; when the promises of God made by Nathan, (compare 2 Sam. vii., and 1 Chron. xvii.,) "the sure mercies of David," seemed to be about to fail. The words "Mercy and Truth" are, as it were, the key-notes to his prayer, and are repeated again and again. St. Augustine has been followed in considering verses 36—46 to apply rather to the humiliation and fall of the Jewish kingdom and Church, than to the Passion of our Lord; yet it might be interpreted of the latter. (Compare Jer. xxxiii. 17—22, and xxii. 28—30.) This Psalm concludes the Third Book of the Psalms.

THE FOURTH DIVISION OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

PSALMS XC.—CVI.

THE ascription of glory to God which stands at the end of Psalm cvi., marking the conclusion of this the fourth book of the Psalms, is—

‘Praised be the Lord God of Israel,
From eternity unto eternity :
And let all the people say, Amen. Hallelujah.’

It was probably finally arranged in its present form, and added to the canon, during the reign of Josiah. The seventeen Psalms of which it is made up appear to present some points of difference, which would distinguish this book from the other books. They are generally neither personal, like those of David, nor national, as those of Asaph and the family of Korah ; they are, for the most part, grandly devotional ; rather glorifying the Almighty as the Creator, and Defender, and King of man, than as the personal Lord of the individual prophet, or as the national God of the people of Israel. It has been thought that the majority of these are ancient hymns of the Church of Israel, written at various periods, from the age of Moses to that of David ; that they were collected by David at the beginning of his reign ; and having been forgotten during the reigns of the idolatrous kings, were again collected and restored to the use of the temple by Josiah, when the Book of the Law, which

had been originally deposited by Moses in the sanctuary, was discovered by Hilkiah the priest, and a covenant had been made by the king and the people to observe the Law. The fact that ten of the Psalms in this book are without titles in the Hebrew, while in the LXX. they have titles which assign them to David, tends to confirm this supposition. Psalm xc. is a prayer written by 'Moses, the man of God,' and bears the marks of high antiquity; xci. and xciii. were also, perhaps, the work of the great Law-giver of Israel. The six Psalms from the ninety-fifth to the hundredth are considered by Bishop Horsley to form one prophetic poem, celebrating the majesty and the righteousness of the kingdom of God, and cited by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 6) under the title of 'The bringing the First-begotten into the world.' However this may be, it is very clear that these ancient Psalms form a complete series, and exhibit a connection between themselves, both in the great majesty of their poetical style, and the lofty grandeur of their teaching.

THE FOURTH DIVISION.

Morning Prayer.

FOR THE BURIAL SERVICE.

PSALM XC. *Domine, refugium.*

1. LORD, Thou hast been our refuge : from one generation to another.

2. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made : Thou art God from everlasting, and world without end.

For the tribes of the children of Adam, wandering in this wilderness of things temporal, with no certain dwelling-place, there is only one refuge in weariness, in danger, in death, — even that strong and loving God Who hath been, is, and will be, the Helper and the Defender of all who seek to Him. To His mighty mercy only can man securely fly from the dangers of life and of death. With Him only is safety, with Him only is unchangeableness. The race of man is ever failing and being renewed, and the generation of time is ever rolling on into the generation of eternity ; but He is ever true, and ever the same. Before the mountains were bid to stand as a refuge from the overflowing waters ; before the earth, which we fancy to be an abiding-place, was made ; before the angelic hosts were called into being, and before man him-

self, with all his little world of fear and frailty, was formed from the dust, He is Immortal, Unchangeable, Almighty, Whose Name hath ever been, **I AM THAT I AM.**

3. Thou turnest man to destruction : again Thou sayest, Come again, ye children of men.

LXX. Turn not man to humiliation ;

For Thou hast said, Be ye turned, sons of men.

4. For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday : seeing that is past as a watch in the night.

At the word of the Eternal, man dies. He has said, ‘Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return.’ At His word he rises again from the dust, in that day ‘when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.’ Between the day of our birth and the day of our death—between the day of our death and the day of our resurrection — between the first day of creation and the last of judgment—who shall say how short or how long is the interval of time in the eyes of the ever-living God? His Holy Spirit has given us the solemn charge—‘Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.’ Yea, time and all its centuries are to Him but as yesterday, as a day which is past and over, and is now as nothing, compared with the to-morrow of eternity. The ages and

the dispensations, the promise to Adam, the engagement with Noah, the oath to Abraham, the covenant with Moses, — these were but watches, through which the children of men had to wait amid the darkness of things created, until the morning should dawn of things uncreated. Now is ‘the night far spent, and the day at hand.’

5. As soon as Thou scatterest them they are even as a sleep : and fade away suddenly like the grass.

Heb. Thou carriest them away as with a flood ;
They are even as a sleep,
They are in the morning as grass that changeth.

LXX. Their years are as things of nought.
In the morning let it depart as the grass.

6. In the morning it is green, and groweth up : but in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered.

The mighty rush of time carries away our feeble lives before it, like the flood of Noah once swept away the dwellers on the earth. Our hopes, and plans, and deeds are but like the fancies that come in slumber—scattered and forgotten when the sleep is past. We ourselves are but as the grass growing in the summer field—springing up green and fresh in the morning of life, but cut down by the mower whose name is Death, and laid lifeless and withering on the earth from which it grew, when the evening of age and decay has come. ‘All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the

field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth : because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it : surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand for ever.'

7. For we consume away in Thy displeasure : and are afraid at Thy wrathful indignation.

8. Thou hast set our misdeeds before Thee : and our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance.

9. For when Thou art angry all our days are gone : we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told.

LXX. Our years are spent in care like a spider.

Short as life is for man's sin, by multiplying his sins he makes it shorter. As we add day to day, so do we add sin to sin, and provoke most justly God's wrath and indignation against us. The children of Israel in the wilderness made their lives shorter than even the brief time given to man, by their idolatries, and stubbornness, and murmurings. The generation of six hundred thousand passed away in their forty years' wanderings in the sight of Moses. And among them that call on the name of Christ, who can tell how many may be 'weak and sickly,' and how many may sleep, for their own misdeeds, or their misbelief? Our iniquities, however hidden they may be from man, are before our God, and

cannot but call forth His displeasure. He is 'the Revealer of secrets.' Our whole lives, with all their sins, lie spread out open and clear before His face. 'He brings to light the hidden things of darkness, and makes manifest the counsels of our evil hearts.' They cannot be dissembled before Him, and He doth not dissemble His wrath against them. Therefore we die. Death is the frown of the Almighty. 'In His pleasure is life.' In His displeasure our term of days contracts and shortens, and they become few indeed. The end, uncertain to each, but yet most certain to all, slacks not in its onward coming; for our years, though we may strive to spin them out in care and sorrow, as a spider spins out her thread, come to an end; they depart and leave us, like a tale that is finished, like a word that is spoken and not repeated, like a thought which has gone from the memory and cannot be recalled.

10. The days of our age are threescore years and ten; and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years: yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.

Seventy years of life is the utmost term we can expect to attain unto. May we not well say with aged Jacob, 'Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage?' It may be that some toil wearily on through eighty years,—yet the experience of 'the

miseries of this sinful world' is but bitter in those evil days, 'when the years come, when we say, I have no pleasure in them.' How short, how dwindling, is even the widest space of fourscore years, beside the eternal ages! Stretch it as we may, the hour is very quickly upon us 'when the dust shall return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return to God Who gave it. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.'

11. But who regardeth the power of Thy wrath : for even thereafter as a man feareth, so is Thy displeasure.

Heb. Who knoweth the might of Thy wrath,
And Thine anger, which is in proportion to the fear of
Thee?

How few think aright of the deep importance of living in the fear of God,—of fearing Him with Whom is the power not only of our life in mortality, but of our life in immortality! Even as a man feareth Him, so is His displeasure: if we fear Him little, and obey Him not, then is His displeasure great and terrible; if we fear Him much, and keep His will, then is His displeasure changed into mercy and goodness. To those who regard aright the power of His wrath, it marvellously becomes the power of His love.

12. So teach us to number our days : that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

May His grace so teach us to number the days of this our mortal life—the yesterday of the past, the

to-day of the present, the to-morrow of the future—that we may not look in folly to ourselves and our vain and empty devices, but to Him Who has made us, and Whose we are,—Whose dealings with us, whether of mercy or chastisement, are ever wise and holy. Number we our days by our daily prayers—number we them by our daily obedience and daily acts of love—number we them by the memories that they bring of holy men who have entered into their Saviour's peace, and by the hopes which are woven with them of glory and of grace won for us! So best can we win the wisdom of salvation. Life is a lesson, the learning which aright in Christ alone can make us wise. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; but fools despise knowledge and instruction.'

13. Turn Thee again, O Lord, at the last : and be gracious unto Thy servants.

14. O satisfy us with Thy mercy, and that soon : so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

The spirit of this wisdom will lead us to turn our hearts and hopes up from this sinful, transitory world of chance and change, to that high and unchangeable God Who would bring us to Himself. Turn we to Him at last in prayer, and He will turn to us both now and at the last in grace. Earth and mortality cannot satisfy us, however we may crave to hold them. His mercy is more than satisfying, His grace

is more than sufficient for all our wants, and needs, and longings. In this world of death and of the dying, we can do little but mourn ; in His better world all tears are wiped from all faces ; there is no more death, there is only unfailing joy and immortal gladness for all the days of immortal life.

15. Comfort us again now after the time that Thou hast plagued us : and for the years wherein we have suffered adversity.

16. Shew Thy servants Thy work : and their children Thy glory.

17. And the glorious Majesty of the Lord our God be upon us : prosper Thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper Thou our handy-work.

Then shall be heard and answered the prayer of the second Moses, the Son of God, for His people. He will give them rest for their labour, comfort for trial, life after death, ages of immortality for years of mortality. Then the fully accomplished work of the Father and of the Son in our redemption is made plain in its completeness and its perfection to them who have served Him. Mercy is seen to be His work, and glory that which He has prepared. The children of men then see that brightness of love and truth which the veil of earthly things had so long hidden from their eyes. Death is swallowed up in life ; the punishment of sin is made by the Almighty Majesty of our God the entrance into holi-

ness and joy. We take refuge from the sadness and poverty of this life, not in the gloom of the grave, but in the light of our God. There He will be over us, with us, in us, in all our works and ways. Let us, therefore, pray that He will be with us here. So whether we live, live we unto Him ; whether we die, die we unto Him ; that in our life we may work His works ; and for our death—‘Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord : even so saith the Spirit ; for they rest from their labours : and their works do follow them.’

This Psalm is “A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God.” It was certainly written by the aged lawgiver of Israel, during the latter years of the wanderings of the people in the wilderness. The sight of death carrying off those tribes of Israel who had come out of Egypt, one after another, until they all perished in their weary journeyings of forty years, and the prophetic knowledge that he himself would die, and not be suffered to enter into the land of rest, must have stirred his mind, and carried him for rest and refuge to that eternal God in whose long-enduring purposes our puny lives and doings seem like things of pought. The name of “Man of God” is also given to Moses in Deut. xxxiii. 1 : “This is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death ;” and this Psalm presents many points of resemblance to the thoughts and expressions of the Books of Moses. Its ancientness, its sublimity, and the solemn grandeur of its poetry, have won for it the admiration of all readers of the Book of Psalms. It is appointed by the Church to be used in the Office for the Burial of the Dead.

PSALM xci. *Qui habitat.*

1. WHoso dwelleth under the defence of the most High : shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

• Heb. He who sitteth in the secret place of the most High.

2. I will say unto the Lord, Thou art my hope, and my strong hold : my God, in Him will I trust.

Like the priest who, ministering in the holy place, sat him down to rest with the glory of the Almighty's presence above him like a sheltering screen ; so he who has in prayer made God his hope and his refuge shall be able to repose securely upon His love and care. Or as in the Holy of Holies the wings of the Cherubim overshadowed the Mercy-seat, so does the fostering providence and grace of God defend His righteous servants. 'We dwell in Him, and He in us.' This all may do by faith in Him ; but He did so above all, Who was the great High Priest, and Whose human nature was the Ark of the better covenant ; Who was always—whether as baptized in Jordan, with the Holy Ghost visibly descending upon Him, or as fasting in the wilderness among the wild beasts,—under the shadow of the Eternal Father.

3. For He shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunter : and from the noisome pestilence.

LXX. For He shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunters,
And from the sharp word.

4. He shall defend thee under His wings, and thou shalt be safe under His feathers : His faithfulness and truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

The righteous may well trust in his God; for He can and will deliver him, both from the snare of the tempter who hunts for souls, and from that infection of sin which is more deadly than any pestilence. Like a hen gathering her chickens under her wings, so will He gather His own, and they shall be eternally safe; or 'like an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings,' so shall the Lord bear aloft His saints: for the Son of Man, Who gathered His people like a hen in the time of His mortality, after His resurrection soared with them to the throne of God like an eagle. 'The shield of faith,' in His faithfulness and truth, shall quench the fiery darts which the wicked one ever is aiming against God's people.

5. Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night : nor for the arrow that flieth by day ;

6. For the pestilence that walketh in darkness : nor for the sickness that destroyeth in the noon-day.

LXX. The demon that is in the noontide

7. A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand : but it shall not come nigh thee.

8. Yea, with thine eyes shalt thou behold : and see the reward of the ungodly.

To him who is ever placing himself in the presence of God, who abideth under the shadow of the Al-

mighty, there can come no fear and no injury. He shall be safe both in body and in soul, both in the light and in darkness, in health and in sickness, in prosperity and adversity. He shall neither perish by those sins of ignorance which, like spectres in the darkness, hover round the unthinking soul; nor shall he be wounded by any wilful and open sins which pierce through the soul like an arrow shot by a foe-man in the broad daylight. The pestilence of concupiscence and fleshly desire, that walketh in darkness and infects the soul with its deadliness unawares, shall not pollute him; nor shall he fall, struck down by the violence of the enemies of righteousness and the malice of the ungodly, when persecution, like the sun, has 'risen with a burning heat.' Covered with the shield of the faithfulness of God, a thousand arrows shall fall harmless by his side, but not one shall come nigh him. The pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the deadly fierceness of the noon-tide blaze, shall each strike down their victims on each side of him by thousands and by tens of thousands; but he stands untouched and unharmed amid it all, like Aaron the priest 'stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed.' In each righteous man is this fulfilled; but above all is it fulfilled in Him Who is the Holy One of God. Sin had wounded and infected all the sons of men, save Him only in Whom was no sin. In Him Who is the Head shall the members find security and health, while the ungodly perish in their sight by the fearful malignity of sin.

9. For Thou, Lord, art my hope : Thou hast set Thine house of defence very high.

Heb. For Thou, O Lord, art my confidence.

Thou hast made the Most High Thy habitation.

10. There shall no evil happen unto thee : neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

Therefore he who has said in earnest reality, 'Thou, O Lord, art my confidence,' has, as it were, built for himself an abiding-place in heaven itself, even under the very shadow of God's glory. He dwells, as it were, in God. Thenceforth his conversation is in heaven. No evil of this world can happen to him, for he is ever above, and not here ; no air of pestilence can breathe around his dwelling, for it is set very high, even there where no evil comes. Therefore he is like his Lord, the Son of Man, Who dwelt on earth not having where to lay His head, and yet 'was in heaven.'

11. For He shall give His angels charge over thee : to keep thee in all thy ways.

12. They shall bear thee in their hands : that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone.

13. Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder : the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet.

This is the marvellous privilege of the heirs of salvation, that the ministering spirits of God are sent forth to watch over them. They have in charge to

guide the children of God in all their ways;—in the ways of their life, which are manifold—in the ways of His commandments, which are manifold—in the ways of their duties, which are manifold. In each and all of these we may stumble, therefore in each and all of these we need a guard. They guard us in all our ways, if all our ways be God's ways; but in our own presumptuous and self-willed ways they have no charge to guard us. Therefore did the tempter hope to ruin the Second Adam, as he had ruined the first, by the temptation of spiritual pride. 'He brought Him to Jerusalem, and set Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' It is ever the voice of the devil which provoketh man to descend, not to ascend: Cast thyself down, saith Satan; Raise thyself up, saith God. He would have had the Saviour, as he would have us, to follow his suggestions while trusting to the mercy of God. If we fall, He will indeed bear with us, and bear us, and raise us up; but if we cast ourselves down, He will leave us to the destruction we have wilfully sought for. But as the Saviour conquered him, 'the lion who seeks to devour,' and 'the great dragon who deceiveth the nations,' so may we conquer him. We may bruise the serpent's head, even as He

bruised it, by obedience to the word and law of God. We may walk through this world's wilderness trampling upon the tempter and his devices, if we strive in all our ways ever to trust in our God, while never tempting Him. So shall we share in our Master's triumph over the Wicked one; and His promise shall be accomplished in us: 'Behold, I give unto you leave to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.'

14. Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him : I will set him up, because he hath known My Name.

15. He shall call upon Me, and I will hear him : yea, I am with him in trouble ; I will deliver him, and bring him to honour.

16. With long life will I satisfy him : and shew him My salvation.

It was in the love of the Father that Christ overcame the snare of the tempter. He would have the words of God rather than earthly bread ;—He would not tempt the Almighty God ;—He would worship Him, and Him only. So did the Well-beloved baffle and confound the enemy. Therefore by following Him may we also be delivered and overcome. Not only our Head, Who now sits in heaven because He hath set His house of defence very high, but we also who are toiling on earth and are still in the wilderness of temptations, whose steps the angels watch

over, lest we stumble at the stones of the law and fall, may hear the voice of the Father—His and ours—promising deliverance and exaltation. He calls, and we in Him; He is heard, and we in Him. Our Father will be with us in trouble, for He was with our Lord; He will deliver us and bring us to His glory, for that our Saviour is gone before us. He will give us both eternity and salvation. Salvation without eternity were but a gift unworthy of His love; eternity without salvation is eternal misery: but Christ has gained an everlasting kingdom, and He is Himself salvation and the Saviour; therefore, because He lives, we in Him shall live also; ‘we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.’

This Psalm has no title; but by the canon of Rabbinical criticism, which decides that a Psalm without a title should, unless there be some reason to the contrary, be assigned to the author of the Psalm which precedes it, it should be also assigned to Moses. With this view St. Jerome agrees. The LXX., the Vulgate, and the Arabic versions ascribe it to David, perhaps because he preserved it and inserted it among the Psalms. It is not improbable that Moses may have been the author of it. Verse 4 is almost identical with the words of Moses in Deut. xxxii. 11, 12, and again xxxiii. 29; and verses 5, 6, 7, 13 are strikingly suggestive of the sufferings and chastisements of the children of Israel in the desert. The change of the persons I and Thou in the verses of this Psalm, have led many to suppose that it was intended to be sung by alternate choruses; but this change is very common in the Psalms, and is rather the expression of an earnest soul communing with its God and with itself, under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Verses 11, 12 were made use of by Satan in his temptation of our Lord, when he would have had Him cast Himself from the high roof of the temple, in order to test the faithfulness of the Almighty’s promise, and vindicate His Messiahship by a public sign of Godhead. The tempter omitted the concluding words of verse 11, as if knowing that flying through the air is not one of the ways of man, and that therefore the promise, as made to man, did not apply to it; and he

stopped short of verse 13, as though fearing that he was encountering Him Who was to bruise the serpent's head. The Saviour repelled the temptation by the declaration of the Father, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," (St. Matt. iv. 6, 7; St. Luke iv. 9—12).

PSALM xcii. *Bonum est confiteri.*

1. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord : and to sing praises unto Thy Name, O most Highest ;

2. To tell of Thy loving-kindness early in the morning : and of Thy truth in the night-season ;

3. Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the lute : upon a loud instrument, and upon the harp.

Everything is good as it shews forth the glory of its Maker. He has made us for His glory, therefore it is good for us to thank Him and to praise Him. 'It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God.' His dealings towards us are ever calling for our thanks. His love to us in the morning of our days, in the time of our prosperity and our salvation,—His truth in the evening of life, in the hour of sorrow and the time of penitence,—these deserve to be acknowledged and confessed with all our heart, and voice, and strength—with the perfect melody of a holy and a spiritual life, in which the praises of the lips keep time with the obedience of

the members to the ten commandments of the law of God, even as the voice keeps time to the hand in playing upon a ten-stringed psaltery.

4. For Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy works : and I will rejoice in giving praise for the operations of Thy hands.

5. O Lord, how glorious are Thy works : Thy thoughts are very deep.

If our own works, and the harmony which our own voice and fingers make, can give us pleasure, how much deeper gladness is there in the harmony of the works of God ! What glory, what beauty, what wisdom is there in that mighty creation which He Himself pronounced to be very good, and from the work of which He rested on that first Sabbath-day which He blessed and hallowed, and the memorial of which He bade His people keep in holiness and rest. But mighty as is the glory of His works, no less mighty is the mystery of His counsels and the righteousness of His providence. His thoughts reach through eternity. 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been His counsellor ?'

6. An unwise man doth not well consider this : and a fool doth not understand it.

7. When the ungodly are green as the grass, and when all the workers of wickedness do

flourish : then shall they be destroyed for ever ; but Thou, Lord, art the most Highest for evermore.

8. For lo, Thine enemies, O Lord, lo, Thine enemies shall perish : and all the workers of wickedness shall be destroyed.

The orderings of His righteous kingdom indeed are deep ; yet to His people they are always grace, even though they seem dark and hidden ; and to the wicked they are always wrath, even though for awhile it be delayed. To know this is wisdom ; to be ignorant of this is senselessness and folly. There are some who pass by carelessly this mighty fact, but they are most unwise ; there are some who cannot understand it, but they are but blinded by their folly. The ungodly may be flourishing like the grass in the fields ; but above them is the eternal and all-righteous God. If they be His enemies, they will speedily fade and fall, like the same grass before the sun's burning heat. He will be evermore the same, unchanged in height and brightness ; but they will consume, and perish, and be destroyed, who do that which He will not have done. He waiteth above in His eternity, until the season of the wicked be past, and that of the righteous come.

9. But mine horn shall be exalted like the horn of an unicorn : for I am anointed with fresh oil.

LXX. And mine age shall be in the fatness of mercy.

10. Mine eye also shall see his lust of mine enemies : and mine ear shall hear his desire of the wicked that arise up against me.

He who trusts in God, and waits for Him, shall at length be more than paid. He shall, though weak in himself, be made strong in his God; he shall share in the honour and the exaltation of his Redeemer. The anointing of holiness and might which was poured upon the Head of the Church shall descend to all the members. He shall have his desire in seeing all the opposition of wickedness perish,—yet perish rather before the glowing love than in the burning wrath of Christ.

11. The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree : and shall spread abroad like a cedar in Libanus.

12. Such as are planted in the house of the Lord : shall flourish in the courts of the house of our God.

13. They also shall bring forth more fruit in their age : and shall be fat and well-liking.

14. That they may shew how true the Lord my strength is : and that there is no unrighteousness in Him.

The wicked shall wither like the grass parched before the glowing heat; but the righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree, which is alike green and an-
an-
fy in the burning drought of summer and in the

chilling storm of winter, and which, as it grows the older, is still the more fruitful. They shall spread abroad like the cedars in Lebanon, which have taken root in the eternal hills, and endure in their lasting grandeur from age to age. The secret of their life and growth is their nearness to God. They are planted in the Church, His temple; they grow up within His courts; they draw their sap from the wells of life which spring thereby. In their age, their fruitfulness shall increase in richness, and sweetness, and abundance. Their fruit of good works shall become more plentiful as the last gathering-in draws nigher. Thus do they, in their joy, in their patience, in their obedience, prove witnesses of the power and the faithfulness of God. They glorify their Father in that they bear much fruit. They learn themselves, and they testify to others, that as all His works are glorious, so all His ways are righteousness,—that as there is no short-coming in His creation, so there is no unrighteousness in His providence,—that ‘His work is perfect, for all His ways are judgments.’

This is “a joyful song for the Sabbath-day.” It was very probably used at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice on that day. There is no evidence to guide us to its author, but it was undoubtedly written before the captivity, and subsequently to the reign of David. Rabbi Kimchi repeats a Rabbinical tradition that this Psalm was composed by Adam, and sung by him immediately after his creation. A Psalm whose internal evidence would more completely discredit this absurd tradition could hardly have been selected. It might, perhaps, have originated in its title. The wonders of God’s creation, which the Sabbath-day suggested, led the mind of the prophet who composed it on to the mysteries of His moral government: the course of this he sees, through faith, to be as perfect and complete as the order of creation.

Evening Prayer.

PSALM xciii. *Dominus regnavit.*

1. THE Lord is King, and hath put on glorious apparel : the Lord hath put on His apparel, and girded Himself with strength.

2. He hath made the round world so sure : that it cannot be moved.

As in the beginning God, the Creator of the world, was by the very act of creation proclaimed an Eternal King, and was invested with the royal apparel of power and might ; so in His resurrection God the Redeemer was proclaimed to be the King of the world ; and He then laid by the sackcloth of human mortality, and clothed Himself with the glorious apparel of incorruption, and was girded with the strength of salvation. He Who had formed the round world, and had established its regular, unvarying order, which nothing can stop or mar, by the same wisdom and goodness built His Church upon that Rock which is Himself, and ordained that the gates of hell should never prevail against her. He has established her as ‘a kingdom that cannot be moved.’

3. Ever since the world began hath Thy seat been prepared : Thou art from everlasting.

From all eternity had the divine counsels been tending to that accomplishment which the fulness of time brought forth, when He Who was the Only-

begotten of the Father before all worlds, received as Man that dominion which He held as God ; and, resplendent in the garments of His passion, sat down in heaven on the right hand of the Father, the Eternal Saviour, the Eternal Judge, the Eternal King.

4. The floods are risen, O Lord, the floods have lift up their voice : the floods have lift up their waves.

5. The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly : but yet the Lord, Who dwelleth on high, is mightier.

His power has been ever over the things which He has made. He in the beginning bade the waters retire, and they obeyed and the dry land appeared ; He was reigning in His own eternity when the fountains of the great deep were broken up and the world was drowned ; in the same calm mightiness He rebuked the waves on the lake of Gennesaret, and they were still. Earthly rage, and fierceness, the tumults of the world and the roarings of hell, may rise, and swell, and shake all around with fear and horror, but above them all there abideth the throne of God from eternity unto eternity, in the calm and awful might of holiness and power.

6. Thy testimonies, O Lord, are very sure : holiness becometh Thine house for ever.

Yea, while the world below is raging like a storm-lashed flood, the people of God can fix their hopes upon His most sure promises, and the immoveable-

ness of His all-embracing love. ‘The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His.’ While the betrayers and murderers of the Lord were raging, the apostles of the Ascended ‘lifted up their voice’ and preached unto them Jesus; and they heard and were subdued. And through that preaching did He build His house, and adorn it with the beauty of unfading holiness. ‘Holiness to the Lord’ is the superscription of the ‘Holy Catholic Church.’ He adorned His house with holiness—not a small portion only, but the whole,—throughout that round world which He made, and which cannot be moved save by Him alone. Holiness becometh His house—for a short time only? Nay! but for ever.

It is impossible to fix the author of this Psalm; it has been given to Moses; yet from its likeness to the forty-sixth, it may be assigned to the Assyrian invasion of Sennacherib. It has no title in the Hebrew; but in some copies of the LXX. it has this inscription: “A Psalm of praise of David for the day before the Sabbath, when the earth was established.” This inscription seems to be given to it in imitation of that of the preceding Psalm; but there might have been some custom of using it in the temple-service on the sixth day of the week which gave ground for it. The Fathers, and among them especially St. Augustine, interpret this Psalm to refer to our Lord’s kingdom, and His glory and power in the Church.

PSALM xciv. *Deus ultionum.*

1. O LORD God, to Whom vengeance belongeth: Thou God, to Whom vengeance belongeth, shew Thyself.

2. Arise, Thou Judge of the world: and reward the proud after their deserving.

It is to God that the executing vengeance for wrong is to be left. 'Vengeance is Mine, saith the Lord; I will repay.' In His own good time He will arise to judge the world. His eternal Epiphany is nigh at hand. Then shall all receive according to their works; the meek according to their meekness, and the proud according to their self-will. Wait we for His judgments in faith, in patience, in fear.

3. Lord, how long shall the ungodly : how long shall the ungodly triumph ?

4. How long shall all wicked doers speak so disdainfully : and make such proud boasting ?

5. They smite down Thy people, O Lord : and trouble Thine heritage.

6. They murder the widow, and the stranger : and put the fatherless to death.

7. And yet they say, Tush, the Lord shall not see : neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.

It is not for us to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power : we dare not intrude into the counsels of the Almighty, to fix either the time of the last dreadful day, or the seasons for His immediate judgments. We may be inclined to murmur, because the evil-doing are not punished ; yet would it be better that we murmured not, lest we ourselves be among them that are punished. The triumphs of the ungodly, the disdainful speakings of the wicked, the injustice, the cruelty,

and the tyranny of the oppressors, are but for a time. They are treasuring up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath : and to their evil deeds they join these blaspheming words,—God sees us not ; and if He sees us, He does not regard what we do. Thus, while He is increasing His long-suffering, they increase their iniquity ; and they make the very patience of the Eternal to be a minister of His vengeance.

8. Take heed, ye unwise among the people : O ye fools, when will ye understand ?

9. He that planted the ear, shall He not hear : or He that made the eye, shall He not see ?

10. Or He that nurtureth the heathen : it is He that teacheth men knowledge, shall not He punish ?

11. The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man : that they are but vain.

What blinded folly, what most awful ignorance, to deny the power of the Almighty, or to doubt the righteousness of the All-holy ! Can the Creator be less than the creature ? Do not the very powers of our own bodies and souls make us understand the wisdom and greatness of Him Who gave them to us. He made the ear ; and can He not hear ? He has given us sight ; and is He Himself blind ? He overlooks all, sustains all, nurtures all ; shall He not judge all ? He has given us an understanding heart, and an enlightened conscience, to know what is good and

what is evil; and He Who understands each and every thought, word, and deed of ours, will without failing punish what is evil and against His righteousness, as He will reward what is according to it. He has made men to know the thoughts of God, and shall He not know the thoughts of men? He seeth all their deeds, He heareth all their words, He knoweth all their thoughts, vain and deceiving as they are; and all that in His infinite wisdom He sees and hears, and knows, in His infinite justice He will most surely judge.

12. Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord : and teachest him in Thy law ;

13. That Thou mayest give him patience in time of adversity : until the pit be digged up for the ungodly.

Blessed is the man to whom, by suffering, by trial, and by patience, God teaches that law of perfect righteousness which is perfect love. He would have us learn that which Himself came to teach us—patience in suffering. We must needs be chastened until we know how both to bear and to forbear, to wait for our Father's will, not to seek our own. The wicked may seem to be strong in his malice and prosperous in his cruelty; he may appear to have a firm grasp of life; but notwithstanding his grave is being dug for him. It is being prepared, deep and dark, and when the patience of outraged justice is exhausted, he will be laid within it, passive, and

helpless, and hopeless. There the troublers shall have tribulation, and the troubled rest.

14. For the Lord will not fail His people : neither will He forsake His inheritance ;

15. Until righteousness turn again unto judgement : all such as are true in heart shall follow it.

Heb. For right shall return to righteousness,
And all the upright shall follow it.

The Lord may chasten His people, but He loves them still. The hand of a Father is known by his chastenings as by his caresses. The very sending adversity to His inheritance is but the message of His promise of unfailing love,—‘I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.’ He will not fail His own, until the right, which for a time seemed lost, is brought back again to clear and confessed righteousness—until the law of right be fully executed in the judgment of right, and justice and judgment be one and the same. Then shall God’s judgments be evidently turned to mercies in behalf of His people, and their former sufferings shall become their greatest advantages. Then shall they who have sought to be upright, and loved the right, and hated the wrong, gladly follow and acquiesce in the plain and unmistakeable declaration of God’s eternal righteousness, revealed in His dealings with men.

16. Who will rise up with me against the

wicked : or who will take my part against the evil-doers ?

17. If the Lord had not helped me : it had not failed but my soul had been put to silence.

18. But when I said, My foot hath slipt : Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.

19. In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart : Thy comforts have refreshed my soul.

Who then will take the part of the sorrowing and oppressed against the malicious and the cruel? Can the soul for an instant hesitate or doubt how to reply to such a question? If there were no righteous God to help us, then should we be shut up in a silence of utter despair; life would be worse than death. But we have an immortal Helper, merciful, loving, true; and when, in impatience and restlessness, we slip from the path of trustfulness,—when our human will creeps on us, saying, Oh that God would slay mine enemy!—He makes us know that we have erred, and holds us, that we fall not so again. When we are tortured by our own crowding and despairing thoughts, and wearied out with our troubles and the anguish of our souls, then He can help us Who was in agony that we might be comforted, and Who put not away from Him the cup of misery, that we might be refreshed with the cup of mercy.

20. Wilt Thou have anything to do with

the stool of wickedness : which imagineth mischief as a law ?

Heb. Shall the tribunal of iniquity be in covenant with Thee,
Which taketh wretchlessness as its law ?

21. They gather them together against the soul of the righteous : and condemn the innocent blood.

22. But the Lord is my refuge : and my God is the strength of my confidence.

23. He shall recompense them their wickedness, and destroy them in their own malice : yea, the Lord our God shall destroy them.

For a time wickedness has power. It makes laws for impiety, as did Nebuchadnezzar, and the counselors of Darius. It seems to possess a throne, and to establish a judgment-seat of its own, and it takes as a law its own violence and reckless self-will. Such was that miserable assembly in which Annas, and Caiaphas, and the blinded Pharisees gathered themselves together against the soul of the righteous Saviour, and condemned the innocent blood which Judas had betrayed into their hands. With such judges, and with such selfish power, the all-righteous Judge is at immortal enmity. He resisted them in the weakness of His humility, much more will He resist such in the mightiness of His glory. In Him Who suffered unjustly can they who suffer unjustly always find a refuge. The soul which flies to Him in adversity wants no longer a refuge in this world's

good, 'or cares to make earthly passion its confidence. It seeks to God; it waits for Him; it puts all its cause into His hands, knowing that He will establish right and will destroy wrong; and that when He destroys wrong, and makes wickedness to perish, they who have loved malice and trusted in wickedness shall perish utterly and miserably, with the wickedness and the malice which they made their own. Punishment shall then bind those in misery whom guilt now binds from good works.

This Psalm has no title in the Hebrew. In the LXX. and the Vulgate it is inscribed, "A Psalm of David for the fourth day of the week." In this respect it resembles the preceding Psalm. It is not impossible but that it may have been solemnly used on that day.

Morning Prayer.

TO BE SAID DAILY IN THE ORDER FOR MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XCV. *Venite, exultemus Domino.*

1. O COME let us sing unto the Lord : let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.

2. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving : and shew ourselves glad in Him with psalms.

'Let us sing unto the Lord :' this is the Christian soul invited to do unceasingly. The prophets of the older dispensation—the saints of the new covenant

—the choirs of the temple on Mount Moriah—the assembly of the heavenly Sion—the angels above in heaven—the Holy Ghost within us—our brethren in the Church—yea, all the creatures of God, with one accord from the beginning to the end, call us day by day to come, bid us day by day to sing unto the Lord God Almighty. Not with fear, but with joy, let us approach Him Who is the rock of our salvation, Who refreshes us with His streams of grace in the desert of the world. Let us come into His presence not by constraint, but willingly, to thank Him for His benefits ;—let our gratitude, if it were possible, outrun and be beforehand with His love. And let us shew our hope, and joy, and gladness, not dully and coldly, but with all the glowing, hallowing words and all the melody of voice our mouths can raise. The Seraphim ‘rest not day nor night’ in their infinite chant of adoration ; the Church below should bring at least her part of daily psalms and daily praise.

3. For the Lord is a great God : and a great King above all gods.

LXX. Because God is a great Lord,
And a great King over all the gods ;
Because the Lord will not reject His people.

4. In His hand are all the corners of the earth : and the strength of the hills is His also.

5. The sea is His, and He made it : and His hands prepared the dry land.

. And why should we come, and why should we

sing? Because He is great above all. He alone is God, and there is none but Him; He is 'the King eternal, immortal, invisible,' and all other influences, authorities, and powers are but servants unto Him, and exist by His will. The idols of the heathen, the things that men set up for themselves to worship, are emptiness and nothing. It is the Lord Who made the heavens that alone is God. The bounds of the earth are distant, but they are all within His hand; the earth is in the hands of the Father and of the Son. The valleys and the deep places of the earth, like the spirits of the humble and the lowly, are in His safeguard, and are possessed by Him; the mountains are strong, but their strength is His, and they have it from Him; emblems they be, as they tower up into heaven, of the angels and archangels who dwell for ever in His presence. The sea, with its ceaseless ebb and flow, its tempests and its treacherous calms, imaging to us this troublesome world and its waves, is His; He made it, and it is compelled to own His laws. And the dry land, barren and fruitless as the hearts of men, He created, and has prepared to bring forth fruit unto His glory.

6. O come, let us worship and fall down : and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

Therefore does the invitation ring again through our ears and hearts from all things on earth and from all things in heaven, from things seen and things unseen, not only to sing each day unto our God in praise, but to worship Him each day in reverence

and awe—to fall down and kneel before that mighty God Who made all things, and us children of men among them—to ‘glorify Him in our body and our spirit, which are God’s.’

7. For He is the Lord our God : and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand

And why should we come, and why should we worship and fall down? Because He is not only a great God, but He is our God ; He is not only the Creator of the earth, and of the hills, of the sea, and of the land, but He is the Redeemer of us miserable sinners. He took our flesh and came down to seek and save us, as a good and loving Shepherd, weak and wandering sheep as we ever are. He feeds us, He rules us. We are not only the sheep of His pasture, and the people of His hand, but the people themselves are His sheep ; and His sheep, for whom He laid down His life, are His people. He calleth us His people, which were not His people : He hath brought us wandering sheep into the one fold under the one Shepherd. Well does it become His people, whom He has created, to sing unto their Lord, and to rejoice in this their salvation ;—well does it become His sheep, whom He has sought and saved, to worship, and fall down, and kneel before their incarnate Lord, at once their Maker and their Saviour !

8. To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts : as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness ;

Heb. Harden not your hearts as Meribah,
As the day of Massah in the wilderness.

9. When your fathers tempted Me : proved Me, and saw My works.

But each day brings its daily warning, as it brings its duty of daily praise and daily prayer. Each day, and above all to-day, cries to us, Harden not your heart. He Who to-day promises forgiveness to the penitent, promises no to-morrow to him who puts off his repentance. 'The Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts : as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.' He saith to us by the voice of His minister, as He said before by the voice of His Psalmist, 'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day ; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end ; while it is said, To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.' The murmuring of Israel in Rephidim, when the water was brought wondrously from the rock, is a lesson for all the days of time. It was for an enduring warning that Moses 'called the name of the place Massah and Meribah because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not ?'

10. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said : It is a people that do err in their hearts, for they have not known My ways ;

11. Unto whom I swear in My wrath : that they should not enter into My rest.

‘But with whom was He grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness? And to whom swear He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us, therefore, fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them.’ Their grieving the Holy Spirit for forty years, their erring not only in their deeds, but in their heart, their stiff-necked ignorance of the ways of God, caused the sentence to go forth against them that they should not enter into the rest of Canaan. They were to wander in the wilderness till they all died who came out of Egypt, save only Caleb and Joshua. But the prophet by the Holy Ghost spake not obscurely of another rest than that of Canaan. If Joshua had given the Church of Israel rest, then he would not have spoken of another day. But there is another rest than the rest of Canaan—a rest not merely on earth from earthly labours, but another high and holy rest, an eternal Sabbath of praise and melody which is still to come. ‘There remaineth,

therefore, a rest to the people of -God.' Let us, therefore, the redeemed of the Church of Christ, looking onward to that future day, praise daily our Maker, worship daily our Redeemer; and 'let us labour to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief' which was set before us in Israel of old, offending after their example, and being made like them in their punishments.

This Psalm, which is untitled in the Hebrew, is in the LXX. and the Vulgate inscribed "by David." The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (iv. 7) says, "He limiteth a certain time, saying in David, To-day;" this may either signify that the Psalm was written by David, or the name of David may be taken as expressing the Book of Psalms: "It is written in David" may be used as, "It is written in the Psalms." The writer, however, evidently by his argument considers the Psalm to be later than the time of Moses. Chapters iii. and iv. of this Epistle contain an inspired commentary on the latter verses of this hymn, in which the warning given by the prophet is shewn to be intended for the Church of Christ; and the oath of God, that the hardened in heart should not enter into the rest of Canaan, is shewn to be sworn also concerning the wicked to whom the Gospel is preached, and the Sabbath-keeping of heaven. This Psalm, which begins with the most exulting tones of praise, passes on to exhortation to prayer and ends with a very awful warning, and has been of old used in the Church as a fit preparation for the daily office of praising God by singing Psalms to Him in His courts: from this it has obtained the name of "the Invitatory Psalm." The key-note to its melody seems to be the word "to-day," and therefore it comes most rightly as the commencement of the work of daily praise. It is the first of those six Psalms which Bishop Horsley supposed to form one poem, under the title of "The bringing of the First-begotten into the world." With verses 8, 9, compare Exod. xvii. 1—7, and with verses 10, 11, compare Num. xiv., xxvi. 64, 65, and xxxii. 10—14.

PSALM xcv. *Cantate Domino.*

1. O SING unto the Lord a new song : sing unto the Lord, all the whole earth.

2. Sing unto the Lord, and praise His Name : be telling of His salvation from day to day.

3. Declare His honour unto the heathen : and His wonders unto all people.

Each shewing forth of God's love to man, each revelation of God, Who is love, to man, claims from man a new confession of gratefulness and joyous praise. If the revealing of God, in the mysteries of the Law, to Israel, awoke in their hearts a strain of gladsome melody, how much more the revealing of God in the person of Jesus Christ to the whole created world! All the whole earth shall sing to Him Whose love redeemeth all the whole earth. Day by day should His Church's praises ascend before Him, as day by day He gives His mercies to His Church. His Church is ever bound to declare the honour of God made Man unto the nations who as yet know Him not, and to preach the wonders of His Gospel, His incarnation, His birth and death, His resurrection and ascension, to every creature, not only by the outward message of sound words, but by the inner and mightier message of obedience, and holiness, and faith.

4. For the Lord is great, and cannot worthily be praised : He is more to be feared than all gods.

5. As for all the gods of the heathen, they are but idols : but it is the Lord that made the heavens.

For He is indeed great, wondrously great in the boundlessness of His love. Words, however high and true, cannot worthily and fully tell His praise; holy thoughts and hallowed lives, goodness seeking to be like His, and self-sacrifice copying His, is the only praise which is worthy indeed of the Fount of all praise. He is to be feared above all things, because His love to man transcends all things. The gods that man had made for himself to worship are but the images of his own miserable fears, and lusts, and powers—perishing images of things that perish. But God in Christ made not man only, but angels—not earth only, but heaven—not the copies only, which we see, but the realities, which are unseen.

6. Glory and worship are before Him : power and honour are in His sanctuary.

Glory and greatness wait before Him like ministering angels to do His bidding. Power and honour are but the Cherubim whereon He sitteth in His unapproachable brightness—near Him, indeed, but yet beneath Him.

7. Ascribe unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people : ascribe unto the Lord worship and power.

8. Ascribe unto the Lord the honour due unto His Name : bring presents, and come into His courts.

All greatness is His; all glory is His; all beauty is His. In ascribing to Him those feeble efforts

which our hearts can offer, we do but render to Him His own. We give but back to Him His own reflected radiance. All that is fair and good, 'whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise,'—they are but scattered rays from His perfection, and their glory we must ascribe to Him; they are but gifts from His infinite treasury, to be rendered in reverence and loyalty to Him again.

9. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness : let the whole earth stand in awe of Him.

The adornments of His earthly temples, and their holy services, the fair order and beauty of the spiritual temple of the Church and her riches of grace, are feeble shadowings out of that clear perfection and immortal beauty which shines in the holiness of His presence in heaven. It is this that makes His awfulness. Perfect power may make the sinner stand in terror; but perfect holiness and perfect love can make the whole earth stand in awe.

10. Tell it out among the heathen that the Lord is King : and that it is He Who hath made the round world so fast that it cannot be moved; and how that He shall judge the people righteously.

Let them who obey Him ever point out to others who know Him not, the glory of that King Who once was crowned with thorns, and throned upon the bitter tree. May all be led to know and to worship Him Who has made the world in power, and will judge it in righteousness! Let all be apostles of that one mighty message, let all be prophets of that one mighty fact!

11. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad : let the sea make a noise, and all that therein is.

12. Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it : then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord.

13. For He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth : and with righteousness to judge the world, and the people with His truth.

Marvellously as He has revealed Himself, His full revelation is not yet accomplished. He has sent messages to the expecting world, He has, indeed, come Himself, but veiling His glory as He came with the mantle of His humiliation; but He will yet come once again in the last time, in full, unshrouded, ineffable majesty. The Creator will visit His creation, the God of love will come to those whom He has loved; and all shall rejoice before Him save they who loved Him not. The heavens and the earth, the angels above, the living dwellers in the world, the dead beneath, the sea and the land, the

fields and the trees, the whole creation, which for a long time has been groaning for man's transgression, shall then shine out once more bright and good, and rejoice in their Maker's unclouded smile. The time draws on; He is coming—He is most surely coming to judge the earth. The world, which man has made so long unrighteous, shall be judged in righteousness; the people who have so long been deceived by the guile of Satan, and the falseness of their own wills and lusts, shall be judged by the truth of Christ. Nothing can convict, or condemn, or punish unrighteousness, but righteousness; nothing can destroy falsehood, but truth. And He Whose work is righteousness and Whose word is truth is coming to make all wrong right, and all evil good, that His world which He has made may rejoice once more in His sight, and that again He may pronounce all to be, as they were when they came forth from His creating hand, very good.

This Psalm is the latter portion of that Psalm which was sung by the Levites when the Ark was brought into the tent which David had pitched for it on Mount Sion. "Then on that day David delivered first this Psalm to thank the Lord, into the hand of Asaph and his brethren." The Psalm itself will be found, with some few variations, and the addition of portions of Psalms cv. and cvi., in 1 Chron. xvi. 23—33. The LXX. give as the title, "When the house was built after the captivity, a song of David." It might have been solemnly used at the building of the second temple. Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Tryphon, declares that the first line of verse 10 originally was, "Tell it among the nations that the Lord hath reigned from the tree," and that the Jews had erased the latter words as too clear a testimony to the Crucifixion.

PSALM xcvii. *Dominus regnavit.*

1. THE Lord is King, the earth may be glad thereof : yea, the multitude of the isles may be glad thereof.

‘The Lord is King.’ This is the proclamation which shall hereafter echo from one end of heaven to the other. Now it is preached in the ear, hereafter it shall be proclaimed upon the eternal house-tops. He Who stood before the unrighteous judge, Who received blows, Who was scourged, Who was crowned with thorns, Who was nailed upon the Cross, Who was mocked as He hung dying on the accursed tree, Who died, Whose side was pierced, Who was buried, Who arose from the dead,—He is King, the King of all kingdoms, the Lord of all realms, the Creator of all worlds. In His glory, as in His humility, let the earth rejoice. Well may the world which He has redeemed be glad in Him ! The people of the land and of the far-off islands of the sea, the Churches of His faithful ones who abide surrounded by the waves of the world, like islands in a stormy sea, may indeed be glad in Him, the once despised, Who now is Lord of all, the King Who once was crucified !

2. Clouds and darkness are round about Him : righteousness and judgement are the habitation of His seat.

3. There shall go a fire before Him : and burn up His enemies on every side.

4. His lightnings gave shine unto the world : the earth saw it, and was afraid.

Clouds and darkness—the clouds of prophecies and the darkness of mysteries—are round about Him, now on His throne as heretofore upon the Cross, for the unbelieving who will not see Him, nor understand Him, nor obey Him. But righteousness and judgment are the very throne upon which He sits, for them who believe in Him and obey Him. He was hidden of old in the clouds of types and prophecy; He is hidden now by the clouds of heaven: but He cometh hereafter with clouds of His saints and holy ones, when He shall be no longer invisible, but every eye shall see Him. The fire of judgment shall go before Him to purge the earth from darkness and from sin, to consume ‘the wood, hay, and stubble,’ which men in their vanity have heaped together—to utterly destroy falsehood, injustice, and wrong. The fire which shall burn His enemies is the fire of perfect righteousness and judgment; for ‘His throne is like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issueth and cometh forth from before Him,’ when the judgment shall be set and ‘the books be opened.’ Bright, sudden, and most terrible shall be that last revelation of the Lord the King. Ever and anon, by the lightnings of His grace hath He given shine unto this sinful world, startling it from its false security into wholesome fear and awe. But at last He Who has sent so many messages shall come

Himself; and, 'as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even to the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.'

5. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord : at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

6. The heavens have declared His righteousness : and all the people have seen His glory.

In that day of the Lord 'the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.' The strength of the hills shall melt like wax in the flame at the presence of the Lord and Maker of the world. And if the strong hills be melted, shall aught of human exaltation or mortal pride be left to stand unsubdued or unrepentant? The terrors of His most just judgment, which have been so long preached on earth, shall then be thundered from one end of heaven to the other. The voice of the archangel and the trump of God shall summon the creation to meet Him; the whole world shall behold their righteous Judge; every eye shall see Him clothed with power and crowned with glory, Whom once we hid our faces from, when He came stained with blood and scarred with thorns.

7. Confounded be all they that worship

carved images, and that delight in vain gods : worship Him, all ye gods.

LXX. And worship Him, all ye His angels.

Heb. i. 6. And let all the angels of God worship Him.

In that mighty revelation of the Only-begotten to the world, all idolaters, and liars, and 'enemies of the Cross of Christ' shall be utterly dismayed and filled with deepest shame. They who have chosen another God instead of the eternal Son, will cry to the melting mountains and the burning rocks to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. He is God: no being may be worshipped, but God alone. We worship not angels; but let us imitate angels, and worship Him Who is worshipped by angels, even the Co-equal and Almighty Son. 'Him the Father hath appointed Heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds, Who is made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son? And again, when He bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him.'

8. Sion heard of it, and rejoiced : and the daughters of Judah were glad, because of Thy judgements, O Lord.

9. For Thou, Lord, art higher than all that

are in the earth : Thou art exalted far above all gods.

But while the wicked shall be confounded at the proclamation of the Advent of the Judge, the Church shall rejoice. The holy and pious souls who dwell within her, the daughters of Judah, shall be glad because of the judgments of their Lord,—they will rejoice and lift up their heads because their redemption has drawn nigh,—they will be glad because their Lord, Who loved them, Who was once lifted up from the earth in shame, is now exalted above all, higher than the highest in Almighty power, King of all kings, Lord of all lords, God of all gods.

10. O ye that love the Lord, see that ye hate the thing which is evil : the Lord preserveth the souls of His saints ; He shall deliver them from the hand of the ungodly.

Then will God shew His fierce hatred of evil by destroying it utterly : and they who would win His love then, must hate it now. To love God and to hate evil are one and the same ; if we love Him, we hate that which He hates ; and we cannot hate that which is evil as we ought, except in and by the love of Him Who is perfect goodness. They who love God need only to hate evil, for they need not to fear it : He will preserve the soul of His saints in the power of His own mighty love. He will daily deliver them, as they ask in their daily prayer, both

from evil and from the Evil one. His love delivers from sin, for He hath pardoned sin; from death, for He hath overcome death; from hell, for 'the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them.'

11. There is sprung up a light for the righteous : and joyful gladness for such as are true-hearted.

Heb. Light is sown for the righteous.

12. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous : and give thanks for a remembrance of His holiness.

The Sun of righteousness hath even now risen, and scattereth on all sides His beams of grace, like a sower scatters his seeds. He is now shining with the clear brightness of grace and truth, Who shall hereafter shine with the lightning-blaze of judgment and of power. In this light of His love there is no darkness and no fear for them that are His. In Him is not only light, but consolation and joy for them that are true of heart,—for them that hate that first-born of all evil, falsehood and lies. And in Him is joy—joy, the seed whereof is little, but the harvest great—here and for ever; and in the thought of His coming there are causes of unending thanksgivings in the remembrance of His holiness. Heed we Him Who biddeth us rejoice, not in things temporal, but in Himself; and give we thanks to Him for the hope which He giveth us, that when

all things here are passed away, we shall reign with Him in His holiness.

This Psalm is a glorious and awful prophecy of the coming of the kingdom of God. That it is prophetic of the Saviour is proved by the quotation of verse 7 in the Epistle to the Hebrews; and it can hardly be doubted but that it refers to His second Advent. It has no title in the Hebrew. The LXX. give as a title "A Psalm of David, when his land was restored." It may perhaps have been written by David after his restoration to his country and throne; and its resemblance to the former part of Psalm xviii., and the mention of Sion, are in favour of the supposition which assigns it to "the Psalmist of Israel."

Evening Prayer.

ONE OF THE CANTICLES FOR EVENSONG.

PSALM xcvi. *Cantate Domino.*

1. O SING unto the Lord a new song : for He hath done marvellous things.

2. With His own right hand, and with His holy arm : hath He gotten Himself the victory.

A new life wants a new song. Our Saviour Christ hath made us new creatures, and our old penitential lamentation for ourselves and our misdeeds must give way to a new song of joy and exultation in the marvels of His Almighty love. The Lord alone has gotten the victory over the evil of the world; 'His own arm brought salvation.' By His nail-pierced hand and His stretched-out arm hath He overcome the world; and in Him and with Him have

they gotten the victory, who 'stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God, and who sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name? For Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest.'

3. The Lord declared His salvation : His righteousness hath He openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.

4. He hath remembered His mercy and truth toward the house of Israel : and all the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our God.

LXX. He hath remembered His mercy to Jacob :

And His truth to the house of Israel.

In Him 'the mystery which was kept secret since the world began is now made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.' In Christ on the Cross is the salvation of God declared; in Christ on the judgment-throne shall His righteousness be openly shewed. He hath shewn Himself, Who is salvation and righteousness, to the heathen who knew Him not, to the Gentiles who were afar off; He has remembered the mercy and truth of the

covenant which He made with Abraham and with Israel, though they forgot it and refused Him. He has redeemed all the ends of the world. Not Israel only, but all the ends of the earth have seen their Lord Who bought them. Wide though they be, they are His. He has paid for them a mighty price, and purchased the whole: and the eyes of all the world at last, though, like aged Simeon, waiting long, have seen His salvation.

5. Shew yourselves joyful unto the Lord, all ye lands : sing, rejoice, and give thanks.

6. Praise the Lord upon the harp : sing to the harp with a psalm of thanksgiving.

7. With trumpets also, and shawms : O shew yourselves joyful before the Lord the King.

Daily looking forward to this marvellous consummation, daily watching for the last appearing of her Lord, the Church in all lands rejoices with daily joy, chants her daily psalms, offers her daily sacrifice of thanks and praise; and in the mystery of the holy Eucharist triumphantly shews forth her Lord's death until He come. She would have her children make melody before their Lord and King with the harp of a holy life and the psalm of a grateful spirit, with the trumpet of confession of a true faith, and the cornets of exhortation and of warning. Joy in the coming of their Lord will be the distinguishing mark of His elect.

8. Let the sea make a noise, and all that therein is : the round world, and they that dwell therein.

9. Let the floods clap their hands, and let the hills be joyful together before the Lord : for He is come to judge the earth.

10. With righteousness shall He judge the world : and the people with equity.

At the revelation of the Son of God the whole creation shall burst out into joy, for that its world-long groaning and its travail are over. The mighty sea shall be glad before its Maker, when it shall 'give up the dead that are in it,' and shall no more be cumbered with man's mortality and the tokens of man's sin; the round world shall rejoice, for that its Maker no longer saith, 'Cursed is the ground for man's sake.' 'There shall be no more curse.' There shall be another message for the creation than that which was preached to man: it will be—not Repent ye, but—Rejoice ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The floods shall clap their hands, like saints upon whom the Spirit has been poured, in adoration of their King: and the hills, like the chosen ones of Christ, shall be joyful together, because He is come to judge the earth—not with human and imperfect judgment, but with perfect righteousness and perfect equity. He will by His coming bring the world from that bondage of sorrow and sin under which it lies, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. That hour is drawing on; but though as yet it be

delayed, let us not delay to make us ready day by day for its appearing.

This has merely the title of "A Psalm." The LXX., the Syriac, and the Vulgate add, "by David;" and the Chaldee inscribes it "A prophetic Psalm." It breathes a tone of holy exultation and rapture, in which all creation is called to join. Men, both of Israel and of the nations, with all instruments of music and the melody of a new song, and the visible creation, the sea, the floods, and the hills, are brought as it were together in a mighty choir to sing in alternate chant the salvation and the righteousness of the ascended Lord of all. It is very fitly used by the Church as one of the Canticles at Evensong.

PSALM xcix. *Dominus regnavit.*

1. THE Lord is King, be the people never so impatient : He sitteth between the cherubims, be the earth never so unquiet.

Heb. The Lord is King, the nations tremble :

He Who sitteth between the cherubims,—the earth is shaken.

2. The Lord is great in Sion : and high above all people.

3. They shall give thanks unto Thy Name : which is great, wonderful, and holy.

The prayer which for so long has been going up from the hearts of God's saints will be at last utterly fulfilled,—Christ's kingdom will have come. The peoples of the world will be impatient in anger and in fear,—the earth and its dwellers will be disquieted ; but at length He Who once came will come the second time in power and majesty, visibly to rule over and to judge the world, even as He sat

visibly of old in His brightness in the temple on Sion. Earthly power is ever on the change, but 'His kingdom cannot be moved.' He shall be revealed in His holy Church, the King of all people, and nations, and languages, and the earth shall stand in awe before her King; He shall receive all honour, and thanksgiving, and praise from His adoring people, Whom once the prophet Isaiah saw 'sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.'

4. The King's power loveth judgement; Thou hast prepared equity: Thou hast executed judgement and righteousness in Jacob.

5. O magnify the Lord our God: and fall down before His footstool, for He is holy.

Our King loveth righteousness: He will execute perfect justice, tempered with perfect mercy. He will judge every man according to his works, summing up and completing the unnoticed righteousness of His providence by an open manifestation to the universe of His holiness and equity. 'We believe that He will come to be our Judge,' therefore let us magnify and exalt Him with our lips and hearts: and let us fall down and worship the man Christ Jesus, Who took our nature, even His man-

hood, from the earth which is His footstool, into the eternity of the Godhead, in which He is equal to the Father. As heaven, which is the throne of God, and earth, which is His footstool, form one universe, so is God and man one Christ,—the everlasting Lord, ‘holy and true,’ in Whom we sinners may appeal from the throne of eternal justice to the footstool of eternal mercy.

6. Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among such as call upon His Name : these called upon the Lord, and He heard them.

7. He spake unto them out of the cloudy pillar : for they kept His testimonies, and the law that He gave them.

8. Thou heardest them, O Lord our God : Thou forgavest them, O God, and punishedst their own inventions.

9. O magnify the Lord our God, and worship Him upon His holy hill : for the Lord our God is holy.

He Who will be in the last days revealed to the whole world as their King, is and ever hath been King of all flesh, and Lord of the world in the eyes of His saints. Moses the lawgiver confessed Him to be King of all, when he held up his hands in intercession in the fight of Israel with Amalek, in Rephidim; and Aaron the high-priest, when he stood between the living and the dead in the pesti-

lence which the murmuring of Israel had brought upon them; and Samuel the prophet, when he prayed to Him and He discomfited the battle-array of the Philistines at Mizpeh. When they appealed to Him as the Almighty King, He heard them and gave judgment in their cause. Then He even visibly answered their call; for when, after the gainsaying of Korah, 'the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation, and behold the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment.' He was ever the King of His chosen ones, and they have ever been His people, and have kept 'the law that He gave them.' He ever heard them when they prayed; He ever forgave them when they craved for mercy; He ever punished them—even Moses, the giver of His law, and Aaron, the priest of His sanctuary—when they followed their own will and their self-advised plans, rather than His royal law and word. Yea, from the beginning even unto the end, seen and unseen, among the children of Abraham and among the nations of the world, in the darkness of Sinai, and in the light of Tabor, in the day of His humiliation and His flesh on earth, and on the right hand of God in heaven,—Christ the Son of God hath ever been an Almighty, all-righteous, ever-present King, reigning in the unity of the Father and of the Holy Ghost, very and eternal God. To Him is all wor-

ship due from His Church on earth and from His Church in heaven, from men here below, and from saints, and angels, and cherubim, and seraphim, in the world on high, where 'they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Which was, and is, and is to come.'

This Psalm, which is untitled in the Hebrew, in the LXX. resembles those which precede it, in being given to David. It was clearly written in the period between the death of Samuel and the captivity. The word "holy," which is three times repeated, at the end of verses 3, 5, 9, seems to divide the Psalm into three parts, and to recal the threefold "Holy, Holy, Holy" in the song of the seraphim in Isa. vi. 1—4, and in the ascription of the four Living Things in Rev. iv. 8. With verse 7 compare also Exod. xxxiii. 7—11.

ONE OF THE CANTICLES AT DAILY MORNING
PRAYER.

PSALM C. *Jubilate Deo.*

1. O BE joyful in the Lord, all ye lands :
serve the Lord with gladness, and come before
His presence with a song.

The Gospel was to be preached to all lands, beginning at Jerusalem—therefore shall all lands be joyful in their Lord. Where there was once the slavery of sin, through Him is proclaimed the freedom of grace. We who once were the bondsmen of corruption and the captives of death, have indeed still a Lord ; but we do Him service, not by constraint, but with gladness,—the gladness of love, for He is the One Who loved us, and died for us, and redeemed us ; and in the fulness of eucharistic joy we come before Him not only with prayers and peni-

tence, but with a song of joy like that of angels,—of ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.’

2. Be ye sure that the Lord He is God : it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves ; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.

By faith are we saved. Let us be sure that our Lord He is God : we crucified Him, scourged Him, spat upon Him, crowned Him with thorns, clothed Him with mockery, hanged Him upon the Cross, pierced Him with nails, wounded Him with a spear, sealed Him within the tomb ; we made Him vile, and rejected Him in our pride and sin ; yet let us believe, be confident, be sure that He is God. He at Whom we mocked is He Who made us ; He Whom we pierced is the Shepherd Who came to save us wandering sheep. ‘We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.’ We could not make ourselves, neither could we save ourselves ; but He Who loved us hath made us His, and led us back again into His own immortal pastures, both feeding us and being Himself our food.

3. O go your way into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise : be thankful unto Him, and speak good of His Name.

Therefore in all joyfulness and lovingness let us go our way in Him Who is the Way, by His truth,

Who is Himself the truth, unto life—unto Him Who is the Life for ever and ever—Who is the Way without erring, the Truth without deceiving, the Life without fading;—the Way by example, the Truth by promise, the Life by reward. Let us, His people, go within His gates of faith and holiness with thanks for His calling and His electing love; let us enter into His earthly courts, His Church below, with praise to Him for the means of grace He has stored therein. The offering of thankfulness and praise which we bring, He will accept, and will lay up for us in His treasury, until we can offer it again most perfectly in His eternal courts of heaven.

4. For the Lord is gracious, His mercy is everlasting : and His truth endureth from generation to generation.

For our Lord and God is gracious, yea, He is grace itself. His mercy is eternal: He never ceases to be merciful. He hath mercy upon us in our mortality, and His mercy fails not until it bringeth us to immortality. His truth endureth for this world and for that which is to come. His promise cannot fail,—‘Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.’

This is most justly entitled in the Hebrew “A Psalm of praise.” The LXX. render it “A Psalm of confession.” It calls upon the redeemed world to rejoice in its Lord, and assigns as grounds for thankfulness, His grace, His mercy, and His truth. It was anciently appointed to be used at the offering of the peace-offerings for thanksgiving, (Lev. vii. 12). It is very fitly appointed by the Church now to be used as one of the Canticles after the second lesson at Morning Prayer. The following remarks of Bishop Horsley, in his Trans-

lation of the Book of Psalms, will throw considerable light upon the six preceding Psalms,—that is, the ninety-fifth to the hundredth. He says—“ These six Psalms form, if I mistake not, one entire prophetic poem, cited by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews, under the title of ‘ The Introduction of the First-Born into the World.’ Each Psalm has its proper subject, which is some particular branch of the general argument, the establishment of the Messiah’s kingdom. The ninety-fifth Psalm asserts Jehovah’s Godhead, and His power over all nature, and exhorts His people to serve Him. In the ninety-sixth Psalm all nations are exhorted to join in His service, because He cometh to judge all mankind, Jew and Gentile. In the ninety-seventh Psalm, Jehovah reigns over all the world, the idols are deserted, the Just One is glorified. In the ninety-eighth Psalm, Jehovah hath done wonders, and wrought deliverance for Himself. He hath remembered His mercy toward the house of Israel: He comes to judge the whole world. This, I think, clearly alludes to a restoration of the Jewish nation. In the ninety-ninth, Jehovah, seated between the cherubim in Zion, the visible Church, reigns over all the world, to be praised for the justice of His government. This Psalm alludes, I think, to a reign of Jehovah in Zion subsequent to the restoration of the Jewish nation, when Moses, Aaron, and Samuel are to bear a part in the general worship. In the hundredth Psalm, all the world is called upon to praise Jehovah the Creator, Whose mercy and truth are everlasting.” Vol. ii. pp. 85, 86.

PSALM ci. *Misericordiam et judicium.*

1. My song shall be of mercy and judgment : unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing.

Each member of the Church of Christ, when the preciousness of his birthright as a child of God and the mightiness of his privileges as an inheritor of heaven is set before his mind, cannot but, like David when exalted to be the ruler of Israel, turn unto his Lord in heaven, ‘ Who hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father,’ with thankfulness and earnest longings to keep the commandments which He Whom he loves hath given. The thoughts

of His mercy in His first coming, and of His judgment in His second coming, will wake up his heart to songs of praise. He will rejoice in the loveliness of his Saviour's mercy, because He executes judgment also; he will rejoice even in the awfulness of judgment, for that it will be executed in mercy. He will rejoice now in the day of mercy, that he may rejoice hereafter in the day of judgment. He will know that both now and hereafter 'mercy shall rejoice against judgment.'

2. O let me have understanding : in the way of godliness.

Heb. I will walk wisely in a godly way.

3. When wilt Thou come unto me : I will walk in my house with a perfect heart.

Thinking thus on God's mercy and judgment, the need of grace for holiness of life, and of diligent prayer to gain it, becomes clear and plain. To walk uprightly and surely in the way that leadeth to life, to long to be brought near to the fount of grace and love, even as David longed for the Ark to come to Sion; to resolve to dwell, as far as lieth in us, in blamelessness and innocence of conscience, within that house of God—that is, His Church—which He hath given to us to be our home and shelter in this dreary world,—these are duties bound up with the knowledge of Jesus' mercy and the confidence of Jesus' love.

4. I will take no wicked thing in hand; I

hate the sins of unfaithfulness : there shall no such cleave unto me.

5. A froward heart shall depart from me : I will not know a wicked person.

‘David behaved himself wisely in all his ways ; and the Lord was with him.’ And thus must he who looks for mercy to the Son of David do in his life here on earth. He must renounce all wickedness, and do nothing in will, word, or deed, that is against the righteous law of God. He must hate unbelief and misbelief, and all the sins that arise from unfaithfulness and doubt. These too often cling to the soul and eat away its life, like some noisome plant clinging round a tree. ‘But thou, O man of God, flee these things ; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.’ The ‘evil heart of unbelief’ must be by grace put aside and utterly forsaken ; every wicked thing, and the very companionship and acquaintance of the wicked, must be given up and thrust away by him whom the Saviour ‘has called His friend.’

6. Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour : him will I destroy.

7. Whoso hath also a proud look and high stomach : I will not suffer him.

He must hate the slanderer and the bearer of false witness, for such slew his Lord ; and he must destroy their evil by his own truth and patience.

The look of pride, and the bosom swelling with haughtiness or burning with anger, and they who have them and indulge them, are no fit allies for the servants of Him Who is 'meek and lowly in heart.' They will do well to shun them in others, and not to suffer them in themselves.

8. Mine eyes look upon such as are faithful in the land : that they may dwell with me.

9. Whoso leadeth a godly life : he shall be my servant.

In all these things he must abide by the example of his Lord, and not by the example of the world. He will choose his friends even as his Lord chooseth His. The Saviour has chosen for His own them that are faithful: His charge to each one is, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;' His promise to each one is, 'If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.' In the communion of saints alone is perfect and true friendship, because there is perfect faith and true godliness of life.

10. There shall no deceitful person dwell in my house : he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.

11. I shall soon destroy all the ungodly that are in the land : that I may root out all wicked doers from the city of the Lord.

Deceitfulness is therefore alien to the child of

God; for the deceitful have no portion in Christ's holy Church. To be without guile is the one thing that the Lord seeks in His people. If 'a righteous man hateth lies,' how much more shall He hate them Who is the righteous God and the very Truth. Thus believing, thus loving, thus obeying, he will be following the footsteps of the true King of the true Israel, Who came into the world to destroy the works of the devil, and to 'purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Christ the ascended King, now at this present time, by His mercy is rooting out wicked doers from the city of the Lord, even the Church militant on earth,—'punished in this world that their souls may be saved in the day of the Lord;' or else at the breaking of the eternal morning He will finally root them out for ever when He shall establish the new Jerusalem, the Church everlastingly triumphant in heaven. 'There shall in no wise enter into that city anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of Life.'

This is "A Psalm of David," written, we can hardly doubt, on his first obtaining his kingdom and becoming the guide and ruler of Israel. This Psalm would be exceedingly applicable to the intentions and the conduct of Josiah in his just and conscientious reign. For "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left," (2 Kings xxii. 2). It is to this, very probably, that its present position, among the Psalms which have been supposed to have been collected and arranged by Josiah, is owing. It is one of the Psalms appointed to be used in the consecration service of our Kings and Queens.

Morning Prayer.

THE FIFTH PENITENTIAL PSALM, AND ONE OF
THE PSALMS FOR ASH-WEDNESDAY.

PSALM cii. *Domine, exaudi.*

1. HEAR my prayer, O Lord : and let my crying come unto Thee.

2. Hide not Thy face from me in the time of my trouble : incline Thine ear unto me when I call ; O hear me, and that right soon.

In our seasons of holy joy, and in those of holy sorrow, in ‘all time of our tribulation, and in all time of our wealth,’ the Church puts a word into her children’s mouths which is ever befitting,—‘O Lord, hear our prayer ; And let our cry come unto Thee.’ This is our especial call, standing, poor and sorrowful, and knocking, in the time of our trouble, before the gate of the all-rich God : and what want we by it ? We want the sight of His face to cheer us,—we want the hearkening of His ear to help us ; above all, we want no delay, lest we perish.

3. For my days are consumed away like smoke : and my bones are burnt up as it were a fire-brand.

4. My heart is smitten down, and withered like grass : so that I forget to eat my bread.

5. For the voice of my groaning : my bones will scarce cleave to my flesh.

LXX. My bones have cleaved to my flesh.

The days of our lives, and all the hopes and the thoughts of pride that we have in them, ascend like the wreaths of smoke, and swell into the air and are scattered away. We none of us, however proud to-day, know what shall be on the morrow. 'For what is our life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.' We ourselves and all our strength, in the fiery trial of affliction, are but like brands within the flame: we quickly fall into dust and ashes, unless He, Who alone can, snatch us like 'brands from the burning.' All mortal flesh is but as grass under the scorching noon; our soul and spirit dries up and withers under temptation, so that we forget that daily prayer and that daily trust upon the promises of God, which is more necessary to our life than even daily bread. Turn we to Him with weeping, fasting, and prayer, and we shall be set free. Under the captivity of sin we groan, but cannot pray—we loathe our food, but do not fast—we are despairing, weak and without strength, but we cannot repent.

6. I am become like a pelican in the wilderness: and like an owl that is in the desert.

7. I have watched, and am even as it were a sparrow: that sitteth alone upon the house-top.

8. Mine enemies revile me all the day long: and they that are mad upon me are sworn together against me.

LXX. And they who praise me have conspired against me.

Until our God hears our prayer, and our cry does come before Him, we are as all lonely and melancholy things—as the pelican in the parching desert—as the owl in the gloomy ruins—as the sparrow deprived of its young alone on the house-top; we are far away from the refreshing source of grace, we are surrounded with the ruins of a fallen and perishing world, we are anxious and restless, and yet afraid to return to our Father, like a timorous and watchful bird which sitteth alone upon a roof, and dares not come down to enter into the house. But the soul, mourning and groaning over its sins, has not only its own desolateness and pain to bear; it becomes the scorn of the hardened and the wicked. Nothing so stirs up the mad wrath of our spiritual foes, as the sight of a sorrowing sinner. As the good angels rejoice over a penitent more even than over a righteous man, so do the evil angels rage many-fold more furiously against a sinner that repenteth, than against him that needeth no repentance.

9. For I have eaten ashes as it were bread : and mingled my drink with weeping ;

10. And that because of Thine indignation and wrath : for Thou hast taken me up, and cast me down.

To the sin-tortured, what are the common enjoyments and vulgar pleasures of this life? The bread they eat is bitter as ashes to their taste; their cup is made salt with their tears; the eternal sentence of 'indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish,

upon every soul that doeth evil,' poisons the daintiest banquets. There is no more self-indulgence for the sinner when his sin has found him out. The righteous judgment of God, like a mighty wrestler with whom it is vain to contend, takes him up from his own low hopes and grovelling plans, and casts him down trembling, helpless, and ashamed.

11. My days are gone like a shadow : and I am withered like grass.

12. But, Thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever : and Thy remembrance throughout all generations.

We are but like a shadow which departs as the sun is setting, the more speedily as it grows the longer. Our days go from us because we go from the true Day. In our disobedience and unbelief we are withered like grass; but that the grass watered by the Saviour's blood will spring afresh. Our days are gone like a vanished shadow; but the Lord of life endureth for ever. May He Who is eternal save us things of time,—may He Who abideth for ever remember us who are passing away both now and hereafter !

13. Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Sion : for it is time that Thou have mercy upon her, yea, the time is come.

14. And why ? Thy servants think upon her stones : and it pitieth them to see her in the dust.

Not by ourselves in our own lonely poverty and vileness, can we expect the mercy of the All-holy, but as members of His Church and as being in the number of His people whom He hath redeemed by His precious blood. Thus can we best cry to Him to arise and have mercy upon His spiritual Sion; thus can we plead His own declaration, that 'now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation;' thus do we learn to turn our thoughts away from the crumbling relics of a fallen world, and rather recal the examples of His Apostles and holy ones whom He laid as living stones in the foundation of His heavenly temple; thus do we learn, that as the Church is brought low unto the dust of earth by worldliness, by covetousness, by lack of love, so does each single soul suffer too. The fall of all is the fall of each; the sin of all is the sin of each, even as the sin of each is the sin of all.

15. The heathen shall fear Thy Name, O Lord : and all the kings of the earth Thy Majesty ;

16. When the Lord shall build up Sion : and when His glory shall appear ;

17. When He turneth Him unto the prayer of the poor destitute : and despiseth not their desire.

And the restoration of all is the restoration of each one. Yea, and more; for the heathen shall fear the Name of God, and all the kingdoms of the

world shall worship Him, when He restores His Church to her proper holiness and beauty, building her up again from the one Corner-stone, with the living stones of His own repentant and obedient people. Then shall 'the city of our fathers' sepulchres' become the immortal Sion; then shall the brightness of His glory be seen, when He shall have heard the prayer of them who in meekness and repentance have called to Him, when He shall have turned unto them who have turned unto Him, and shall have granted the petition which day by day His Church hath brought before Him, that 'His Name may be hallowed, and His kingdom come.'

18. This shall be written for those that come after : and the people which shall be born shall praise the Lord.

19. For He hath looked down from His sanctuary : out of the heaven did the Lord behold the earth ;

20. That He might hear the mournings of such as are in captivity : and deliver the children appointed unto death ;

21. That they may declare the Name of the Lord in Sion : and His worship at Jerusalem ;

22. When the people are gathered together : and the kingdoms also, to serve the Lord.

Therefore the sorrowing and repenting soul must be comforted in the consolation of the Church ; for that very grace which builds up the Church of God

from the ruins of mortality, converts, pardons, and restores the soul ruined by its sins. 'He is the Saviour of the body' Who is the Saviour of each member thereof; Who was revealed in prophecy to times past, and Who shall be preached in His Gospel in times to come; Who looked down from His holy place in heaven, and saw our wretchedness and slavery, even as of old He looked down and saw the misery of His people in Egypt. But He not only out of heaven beheld the earth, but out of heaven He descended upon earth; He came 'to heal the broken-hearted, and to preach deliverance to the captives;' He came, that the prisoners being set free, and the doomed to death being pardoned, might evermore give thanks unto Him in His holy Church, into which shall be gathered all nations and all kingdoms, to serve Him in the unity of His faith and the obedience of His fear.

23. He brought down my strength in my journey : and shortened my days.

LXX. She hath answered Him in the way of His might:
The fewness of my days announce to me.

24. But I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of mine age : as for Thy years, they endure throughout all generations.

True it is, that for the sin of man his strength in the journey of this his mortal life has been made weakness, and his days have been shortened. But for help and refuge in this shortness of our earthly time, we must flee unto the Lord of Eternity. He

hath taken our weakness into His might, and hath gathered our few and shortened days into His own everlasting years. We are in Him, and He Himself is in us, 'that God may be all in all.' He taketh us away from our years to take us into His own eternity. For the eternity of God and God Himself are not different, but the same: eternity is the very substance of God, which hath in it nothing changeable. In it nothing is past, as if it were no longer; nothing is future, as if it were not yet come. In it there is nothing but *Is*. There *Was* and *Will be* have no place; because what was, now no longer exists; and what will be, is not yet come: but whatever is in eternity, eternally *Is*.

25. Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands.

26. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: they all shall wax old as doth a garment.

27. And as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail.

Yea, He came to us and dwelt among us, Whose Name is the Word—the Word before all ages, through Whom the ages were created; He, Who is the uncreated Wisdom, in the beginning founded the earth and made the heavens. He it was Who spake, and it was done. They are creatures of time; they have

their growth, their perfection, and their old age. They abide their time; they fulfil their purpose; and they are laid aside like a disused garment. In the end of all things, they who in Christ have put off corruption and have put on incorruption, shall behold and see a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth shall have passed away, and 'there shall be no more sea.' These shall perish; but our Christ and Lord, the everlasting and almighty Word, Who was before these, abideth the same, unchanged and unchangeable, when they have passed away;—the same in might, the same in glory, the same in goodness, the same in love. His mercy fails not, even as His years fail not, for they are both eternal and of eternity.

28. The children of Thy servants shall continue : and their seed shall stand fast in Thy sight.

He is that Son of Man in Whom all the children of men shall find immortal life; He is that Seed of David, Whose crown shall never be cast down, Whose throne shall have no end. His subjects shall never be removed from before the face of their King and Saviour. Through Him, Who came in human flesh into things temporal, that He might lead them to those things eternal, shall they attain those everlasting years, in which days are not measured by the revolvings of the sun, but that which is abideth ever as it is, because it alone *Is* truly. 'They shall be for ever with the Lord.'

The title of this Psalm is "The supplication of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord." It has been assigned by various commentators to different persons and different periods, from David and his time to the captivity. If it were written by David, there appears to be no reason why the title should not have assigned it to him. It is more probably a later Psalm, and belongs to the reign of Josiah. Indeed, the message of God concerning Judah, which was sent to him, notwithstanding his earnest, zealous, heart-felt strivings after repentance and reformation for his people, which must have made him "afflicted" indeed, and "overwhelmed" him, would seem clearly to point out Josiah himself as the writer. "Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of His great wrath, wherewith His anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked Him withal. And the Lord said, *I will remove Judah also out of My sight*, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off the city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My Name shall be there." (2 Kings xxiii. 26, 27.) Overwhelmed by this severe and yet righteous threatening, the pious king would doubtless pour out his complaint before the Lord, pleading before Him his own affliction, the misery and ruin of Zion, the frailness of man, and the majesty and eternity of God Who would work out His own promises in His own time and way, until he attained at last unto the conviction, that "the children of God's servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, should continue, and the seed of David should stand fast in His sight," notwithstanding their sins and His threatenings. This Psalm is one of those seven which are called Penitential, and is appointed by the Church for the first day of Lent. Verses 25, 26, 27 are cited in the Epistle to the Hebrews as declaring the eternal being of God the Son; the Psalm is therefore addressed to Christ our Lord.

PSALM ciii. *Benedic, anima mea.*

1. PRAISE the Lord, O my soul : and all that is within me praise His holy Name.

Whom should we praise but our God? Whom should that which is best and noblest in us, even our soul, with all the hopes, and aspirations, and affections, and yearnings of the inner man—whom should

our soul bless, but Him Who hath loved it with an immortal love, Who hath redeemed it from eternal loss and pain, and Who alone can fill its infinite longings with His infinite joy?

2. Praise the Lord, O my soul : and forget not all His benefits ;

3. Who forgiveth all thy sin : and healeth all thine infirmities ;

4. Who saveth thy life from destruction : and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness ;

5. Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things : making thee young and lusty as an eagle.

LXX. That satisfieth thy desire with good things,
So that thy youth is renewed like an eagle's.

Yea, let our soul, and mind, and strength, our whole life and being, rise with one strong cry of blessing and praise to Him Who is all to us, and hath done all for us! Careless and forgetful we are of many of the good gifts of our God, but let us not forget them all! Some of His benefits let the adoring soul remember,—His forgiveness of our sins as the one Saviour, His healing our infirmities as the great Physician,—His healing, by His forgiveness, the blindness of our ignorance, the lameness of our faithlessness, the leprosy of our carnal lusts, the deafness of our hardened hearts, the dumbness of our unthankful souls. He hath died that He might

save our life from infinite destruction; He hath risen again that He might crown our pardoned nature with the radiance of mercy and the riches of love. He hath full-filled us with His grace, giving us to eat the Bread of heaven, satisfying us here with the good things of His means of grace, that we may rise again from the dead into unearthly glory in the morning of the resurrection, and be caught up with His saints to meet Him in the air, like eagles that have moulted and renewed the beauty of their plumage, and that are winging their way in strength and speed towards the risen sun. Let our souls praise Him unceasingly Who has said,—‘Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.’

6. The Lord executeth righteousness and judgement : for all them that are oppressed with wrong.

7. He shewed His ways unto Moses : His works unto the children of Israel.

Our God executes most just judgment upon all, and His righteousness is especially a refuge to those that are oppressed, from their oppressors. He gave His law—a transcript of His holiness—to His people Israel on Sinai, by the hand of Moses; and He Himself ‘descended in the cloud, and stood with Moses there, and proclaimed the Name of the Lord.’

8. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy : long-suffering, and of great goodness.

9. He will not alway be chiding : neither keepeth He His anger for ever.

10. He hath not dealt with us after our sins : nor rewarded us according to our wickednesses.

‘And the Lord passed by before Moses, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin,’ and yet just and righteous to the guilty. These His attributes He proclaims no less clearly by His providence now, than He proclaimed them by His voice on Sinai. He Himself is hidden, but His love is shewn most plainly. His patience and His goodness, His readiness to forgive, if we would only be ready to repentance, His ceasing from His anger, if we would only cease from our evil doing,—all these are made most plain by His dealings with His people. He did not deal with Israel after their sins, He rewarded not them according to their wickedness; and therefore His Church now has boldness to pray, ‘O Lord, deal not with us after our sins: Neither reward us after our iniquities.’

11. For look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth : so great is His mercy also toward them that fear Him.

12. Look how wide also the east is from the west : so far hath He set our sins from us.

13. Yea, like as a father pitieth his own

children : even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear Him.

Mighty indeed is the space between the infinite height of heaven above and the earth beneath, yet mighty as that,—or if there be aught higher,—is the mercy of our Lord toward them that humble themselves before Him. Wide indeed is the distance between the east and the west, yet so far,—or if there be anything more distant,—hath He set our sins from us. The measure of His Cross reacheth, like the ladder of Jacob, from earth to heaven, and such was the space that the mercy of the Redeemer spanned. His arms were extended wide to the east and to the west, separating in the vastness of His atoning love our sins from us. Like as a father loves his children, pities them in their sorrows, aids them in their efforts, and supplies them in their wants, so doth He Who is very love, from Whom all fatherhood in heaven and earth is named, look in mercy upon His creatures when they turn to Him in fear and worship. He Who hath taught us to say to Him, ‘Our Father, Which art in heaven,’ will ever be to us the Father which He hath bidden us to call Him. He may one while be angry with us, yet He is our Father; He may chasten us and afflict us, yet He is our Father. Children are we, often profitless and self-willed; yet as a father pitieth his children, so ever doth He pity us.

14. For He knoweth whereof we are made :
He remembereth that we are but dust.

15. The days of man are but as grass : for he flourisheth as a flower of the field.

16. For as soon as the wind goeth over it, it is gone : and the place thereof shall know it no more.

He knoweth what we are,—what we were made,—how we have fallen,—by what means we may be again restored. He knoweth from what He made us in the beginning. We are formed of clay: ‘the first man is of the earth, earthy, the second Man is the Lord from heaven.’ He remembereth His sentence upon us, ‘Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.’ Adam our father was the first who brought death upon us, Christ our Redeemer, Who came after him, yet rose before him, and brought life and immortality to them whose days were but as grass, whose beauty and honour beneath the breath of their Maker’s displeasure were but like a flower breathed upon by the scorching wind, and withered, and forgottē.

17. But the merciful goodness of the Lord endureth for ever and ever upon them that fear Him : and His righteousness upon children’s children ;

18. Even upon such as keep His covenant : and think upon His commandments to do them.

‘All flesh is grass ;’ but the Word was made flesh, and became as we are, that we frail things might be

clothed with immortality. His merciful goodness, by which He pitied us, is not merely for the brief summer day of our mortal life, but endureth for ever and ever upon them who abide in His faith and fear. 'He is God, the faithful God, Which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations;' therefore all the children of men unto many generations, if they will keep His covenant Who hath saved them, and walk in the way of His commandments Who hath loved them, shall be made righteous before God in Him Who, being the Word Which abideth for evermore, became even one with the grass which goeth in a day.

19. The Lord hath prepared His seat in heaven : and His kingdom ruleth over all.

He Who descended and died, hath lifted up to heaven the nature which He took upon Himself, and there sitteth on the right hand of God, the King of a kingdom boundless and eternal. But He hath also, as it were, another seat and another heaven, even the heart of each one who loveth Him and keepeth His commandments. He Whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, will yet deign to dwell within a faithful and contrite heart.

20. O praise the Lord, ye angels of His, ye that excel in strength : ye that fulfil His commandment, and hearken unto the voice of His words.

21. O praise the Lord, all ye His hosts :
ye servants of His that do His pleasure.

22. Q speak good of the Lord, all ye works
of His, in all places of His dominion : praise
thou the Lord, O my soul.

Therefore praise we our God. But not alone :
the angels, the mighty beings whom He has created
to do His pleasure, to see His glory, to hear His
voice, are ever praising Him ; the hosts of Cherubim
and Seraphim cease not their eternal cry of Holy,
Holy, Holy. They praise Him with their deeds as
with their words—readily, unweariedly, perfectly. All
His works, in all the worlds which He has made,
bless and praise Him Who made them what they
are. Surely those souls which He has redeemed
should join in the same ceaseless Alleluia,—surely
His praise should be spoken on earth, as it is in
heaven !

This Psalm is an alphabetic Psalm ; it is in the title ascribed to
David. It is full of the most eager and loving feelings of praise and
thankfulness to God, the compassionate and forgiving Father of His
creatures. With verse 13 compare St. Matth. vii. 9—11.

Ebening Prayer.

FOR WHITSUNDAY.

PSALM CIV. *Benedic, anima mea.*

1. PRAISE the Lord, O my soul : O Lord
my God, Thou art become exceeding glorious ;
Thou art clothed with majesty and honour.

2. Thou deckest Thyself with light as it were with a garment : and spreadest out the heavens like a curtain.

3. Who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters : and maketh the clouds His chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind.

Each created, redeemed, regenerated soul is bound to praise the Lord, the Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, for ^{that} God the Son, Who in the beginning made the worlds, and Whose grace is ever carrying on His work to its perfect end by the operation of the Holy Ghost, has been revealed before us in His exceeding glory. He, as the eternal High-priest, hath put on the Urim and Thummim of majesty and honour, and hath clothed Himself with light, as a priest clothes himself with his holy vestments: His brightness on the mount of transfiguration was but a passing glimpse of what He is now, ever hath been, and ever shall be. He is the true Light, therefore His angels are the angels of light, His children the children of light, His doctrine the doctrine of light. The universe is His tabernacle; the heavens, visible and invisible, are the curtains which shroud His holy place. He hath laid the beams and foundations of His holy of holies very high, even above the waters which are above the firmament. The clouds and the winds of the lower heaven are His chariot, upon which He stood when He ascended from Olivet, upon which He will sit when He cometh again.

4. He maketh His angels spirits : and His ministers a flaming fire.

His attendants and His ministers are the hosts of heaven, the twelve legions of angels who do His bidding. They rush to execute His command like the swift and viewless winds ; they are spirits whose power is felt, but they themselves are unseen. He maketh His ministers like a flaming fire, bright and terrible like a lightning-flash, burning with zeal and burning with love. Mighty and strong as are those spiritual beings, they instantly obey their Master's will, no less than the material elements of this lower earth ; they hear and do in heaven, even as the wind that blows, or the fire that burns here below. For 'when the Father bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him. And of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.'

5. He laid the foundations of the earth : that it never should move at any time.

6. Thou coveredst it with the deep like as with a garment : the waters stand in the hills.

7. At Thy rebuke they flee : at the voice of Thy thunder they are afraid.

8. They go up as high as the hills, and down to the valleys beneath : even unto the place which Thou hast appointed for them.

LXX. The hills go up, the valleys go down.

9. Thou hast set them their bounds which they shall not pass : neither turn again to cover the earth.

His creating power in the beginning founded the earth, that nothing should move it from its appointed order. It was covered with the deep of waters, even above the highest hills; but He said, 'Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.' And at His Almighty command they hasted like servants fearing a rebuke, or like men fleeing before the thunder of a storm. They left the hills which rose up from the face of the earth, they poured down the valleys in a rapid flood, until they came to their appointed place, 'the gathering together of the waters which is called the sea.' There He appointed their shores and set them their bounds; and gave a promise to His servant Noah that they should never again cover the earth. And as God the Creator hath wrought in the natural universe, so also doth God the Sanctifier work in the spiritual world. He hath established the Church, the kingdom of Christ, bidding it, by the preaching of His gospel and the thunder of the word, to arise from out of the waters of this troublesome world; He hath checked the self-will and the pride of the enemies of the Church; and hath set around her the bounds of the one true faith. The unbelieving are envious and malicious, but their murmurings are but like the sound of the small waves on the shore.

Christ hath promised that the salt and bitter waters of the world shall never rise again to cover His Church which He hath redeemed.

10. He sendeth the springs into the rivers : which run among the hills.

11. All beasts of the field drink thereof : and the wild asses quench their thirst.

12. Beside them shall the fowls of the air have their habitation : and sing among the branches.

LXX. They shall sing from the midst of the rocks.

By His ordinance the springs and the rills feed the water-brooks which run between the hills, at which the beasts which are used for the service of man, and the wild animals also, quench their thirst. The birds of the air, too, resort to them for their dwellings, and thank their Maker after their fashion in their songs. And even thus doth God the Holy Ghost send forth the refreshings of His grace into the Church, which arise from the sacraments and means of grace, at which all the children of men, even they who by nature were born, like the wild ass, headstrong and untamed, can slake the thirst of earthly passion ; while the heavenly-minded, like the birds by the margins of the fountains, dwell ever near to the river of the water of life, and are ever praising their Saviour in melody of heart.

13. He watereth the hills from above : the earth is filled with the fruit of Thy works.

14. He bringeth forth grass for the cattle : and green herb for the service of men ;

15. That He may bring food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man : and oil to make him a cheerful countenance, and bread to strengthen man's heart.

The mountains, which are the rulers in His Church, and the preachers of His truth, are themselves watered from above. Their doctrine is not their own, but their Lord's. From them shall the earth—that is, the fields of the Church—be watered, and shall bring forth the fruit of good works abundantly,—fruit which yet is not their own, but is to be rendered as a tribute of obedience to their God. And for those who labour in the word, and for them that hear them, the Lord Himself has promised to provide. He Who feedeth the cattle, and maketh the herbs of the field to grow for man's use, has said, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' He Who giveth them the poorer gift, the food of the body—corn, and wine, and oil—will not withhold from them that love Him His richer bounty, even the mystical Bread and the mystical Wine which, through the Holy Spirit, gladden not the body, but the heart,—strengthen not the flesh, but the spirit,—together with that heavenly oil, even the 'unction from the Holy One,' which cheers the penitent and the sorrowing. These are from God the Holy Ghost: He giveth the living bread and

the wine of grace, the Body and Blood of Him Who died and rose, to them that hunger and thirst after righteousness, and maketh them strong by union with Christ, who in themselves are weak.

16. The trees of the Lord also are full of sap : even the cedars of Libanus which He hath planted ;

17. Wherein the birds make their nests : and the fir-trees are a dwelling for the stork.

LXX. The sparrows make their nest there :

The house of the heron is their leader.

18. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats : and so are the stony rocks for the conies.

Heb. The lofty hills are for the ibex :

The rocks a refuge for the jerboa.

The trees of the Lord are they which are planted by God ; they are emblems of the righteous and the holy, who are 'like trees planted by the water-side.' They are filled with grace, they are nourished with mercy. Each in his turn, the lowly and the lofty, is made green and fruitful by the gifts of the Spirit ; first the trees of the field, next the cedars of Lebanon. There are cedars which shall be rooted up, and there are cedars which our heavenly Father hath planted. These 'trees of righteousness' stand in the mighty garden of God, even the Church in which He hath made room, and hath prepared a place for all who come to Him. In this second Eden dwell all, spiritual souls, whether they be timid and fearful

or whether they be bold and strong, like birds nestling within the safety of a forest. There, too, are heights of mysteries unto which the aspiring soul may strive to ascend, as the chamois or the ibex climbs the mountain-peaks; and there is a Rock, even Christ, within the shadow of Which the feeble may be most secure from all their foes, as the jerboa among the sand-cliffs of the wilderness. For these last are indeed among 'the things which are little upon earth, but are exceeding wise;' 'for though they be but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks;' and thereby do they teach us a lesson of wisdom and salvation.

19. He appointed the moon for certain seasons : and the sun knoweth his going down.

20. Thou makest darkness that it may be night : wherein all the beasts of the forest do move.

21. The lions roaring after their prey : do seek their meat from God.

22. The sun ariseth, and they get them away together : and lay them down in their dens.

He Who made the two great lights, and appointed them in the firmament of heaven 'for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years,' made also the Church, who 'putteth forth her precious things as the moon,' who hath her wanings and her changes, from the dim light of the Church militant to the full beauty of the Church triumphant. And the Sun of

righteousness, even the eternal Word, is both her Creator and the Giver of her light. He shone forth as the Light of this world, and ran His course, even to His setting. He set in the darkness of Calvary, not by fate or chance, but of His own eternal will. His setting was foreknown and foredoomed from the eternal ages. He said, 'I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.' When His light is withdrawn, darkness comes over the earth; then do the spirits of evil, the devil and his angels, prowl in fierceness and malice, seeking whom they may devour, like lions roaring after their prey, and seeking their food in the obscurity of night. But the darkness of this world's evil cometh to a close; the Sun ariseth again, having subdued the thick blackness of death and of the grave. The divine light of love shineth upon the nations, and the spirits of evil retire baffled to their own prison-house, to abide their judgment, like wild beasts returning to their dens at the dawn of day.

23. Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour : until the evening.

In the light of Christ and in the power of the Holy Ghost, man, redeemed and regenerate, goes forth to work the works of God. He is bidden in the early morning of his days to go and work in his Father's vineyard, and by grace he goes,—until the night cometh, when his labours cease, and he lies down to sleep in Jesus, awaiting the morning of the Resurrection.

24. O Lord, how manifold are Thy works : in wisdom hast Thou made them all ; the earth is full of Thy riches.

How great, how glorious are the doings of our God in this universe of beings seen and unseen, of things temporal and things eternal ! They are all full of wisdom and understanding ; and He Who is the eternal Wisdom has accomplished them. In His works which He has done, 'all are double one against another, and He hath made nothing imperfect.' He hath set before us these mortal figures, that by them we might be brought to the knowledge of immortal truth. The earth is full of His riches of goodness, which are a parable of His riches of grace ; and its order and its beauty are a shadow of the immortal brightness and loveliness of heaven.

25. So is the great and wide sea also : wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

26. There go the ships, and there is that Leviathan : whom Thou hast made to take his pastime therein.

LXX. There is the dragon whom Thou hast formed to make sport of him.

But the sea with its marvellous crowd of inhabitants, its fishes both small and great, 'the great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters bring forth abundantly,' calls also for our thought and wonder. And this mighty portion of

the creation pictures to us the world and its temptations. Many are the dwellers therein, who are sunk in the cares and troubles of this earthly life; but through them all and above them all may the Christian be safely carried in that ship which is the ark of Christ's Church, whose pilot is the Saviour, whose haven is eternal life. In that ship alone can we escape the might of that mighty dragon of the waters—our ancient foe, cunning in his wiles, glowing in his rage, who boasteth that he is the prince of this world, and that the glory of the kingdoms of the earth is his, but who yet shall finally be trampled down in scorn by the might of Christ in that new-made world where 'there is no more sea.'

27. These wait all upon Thee : that Thou mayest give them meat in due season.

28. When Thou givest it them they gather it : and when Thou openest Thy hand they are filled with good.

29. When 'Thou hidest Thy face they are troubled : when Thou takest away their breath they die, and are turned again to their dust.

30. When Thou lettest Thy breath go forth they shall be made : and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Even as all the living creation depend for their life and sustenance upon their Maker,—even as He feeds the birds of the air when they call upon Him, the wild beasts of the desert, and the fishes of the

sea,—even as they have to wait until He opens His hand and satisfies them; so in the same way the spiritual life and growth in grace of each one child of man is from the Holy Ghost, ‘the Lord and Giver of Life.’ We wait upon Him for all we have; and all that we are before the eyes of God is of Him. Or ourselves we die, but He feedeth us with His truth; in ourselves we are nothing, but He openeth His hand, He revealeth to us Christ our Saviour, and we are filled with good. And as the living things of the creation perish and return to the dust when the face of their Maker is turned from them, so we without grace, and apart from Christ, were dead in trespasses and sins. But by the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the pouring of the Spirit of God upon all flesh, man is endued with life again, and the face of the spiritual world is changed, even as the face of the natural world shall be changed at the resurrection-day.

31. The glorious Majesty of the Lord shall endure for ever : the Lord shall rejoice in His works.

32. The earth shall tremble at the look of Him : if He do but touch the hills, they shall smoke.

But in all and through all is the operation of the glorious majesty of the ever-blessed Trinity, ever working goodness to His creatures and glory to His own all-holy Name,—creating, saving, sanctifying,

crowning, until the unending Sabbath dawns, and His work is perfected. Meanwhile before its Maker let the earth, and all the things therein, tremble; let the mountains—types of all that is high and strong—quake and smoulder at His presence, like Sinai of old.

33. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live : I will praise my God while I have my being.

34. And so shall my words please Him : my joy shall be in the Lord.

Heb. My meditation shall be acceptable to Him.

Before Him, and in the joy of the Holy Ghost, must we rejoice. We are His and in Him for ever and ever, therefore while we have life and being must we sing praises unto Him. With meditations on His works within our hearts, and songs of His praise upon our lips, we can here taste of the joy with which hereafter we shall be filled.

35. As for sinners, they shall be consumed out of the earth, and the ungodly shall come to an end : praise thou the Lord, O my soul, praise the Lord.

When the wicked shall have been consumed from the face of the earth, the ungodly and all their doings shall have come to an end and past away, still shall the joy of the glorified be ever fresh and new, and their Alleluias shall ring more clearly and more rapturously, when the beauty of creation has given place

to the uncreated beauty in the presence of the eternal God.

This Psalm is appointed by the Church for Whitsunday. This very fact should teach us that it is to be understood not merely as a celebration of God's power and goodness in the world of nature, but as also containing hints and parables of His grace in dealing with our souls and spirits through His Holy Spirit. It is a hymn of praise for the creation, and for that which the creation signifies. St. Augustine says, in his Commentary, "This Psalm almost wholly consists of figures and mysteries, and bath need of diligent attention, although what is said may also be taken literally. In all of what is said therein a spiritual meaning must be sought for, to discover which our longings in Christ's name will help us; by which, with invisible hands, we knock at an invisible door, that it may be invisibly opened unto us, and we may enter invisibly, and invisibly be healed." So also in the Commentary ascribed to St. Jerome, each verse has a spiritual interpretation given to it. It has no title in the Hebrew, but in some copies of the LXX. is inscribed "By David, On the ordering of the world." Verse 4 is cited in Hebrews i. 6, to prove that the Son of God is greater than the angels.

Morning Prayer.

PSALM CV. *Confitemini Domino.*

1. O GIVE thanks unto the Lord, and call upon His Name : tell the people what things He hath done.

2. O let your songs be of Him, and praise Him : and let your talking be of all His wondrous works.

3. Rejoice in His holy Name : let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.

4. Seek the Lord and His strength : seek His face evermore.

5. Remember the marvellous works that He hath done : His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,

6. O ye seed of Abraham His servant : ye children of Jacob His chosen.

All thanksgiving, and praise, and outpourings of holy joy, were due from Israel, the seed of Abraham after the flesh, to God Who had dealt wondrously and faithfully with them in bringing them into the promised land, and the possession of Canaan.

7. He is the Lord our God : His judgments are in all the world.

8. He hath been alway mindful of His covenant and promise : that He made to a thousand generations ;

9. Even the covenant that He made with Abraham : and the oath that He sware unto Isaac ;

10. And appointed the same unto Jacob for a law : and to Israel for an everlasting testament ;

11. Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan : the lot of your inheritance ;

12. When there were yet but a few of them : and they strangers in the land ;

13. What time as they went from one nation to another : from one kingdom to another people ;

14. He suffered no man to do them wrong : but reprov'd even kings for their sakes ;

15. Touch not Mine Anointed : and do My prophets no harm.

He Who is the Almighty disposer of all things, Whose righteous providence ordereth and governeth the whole world, revealed Himself especially to Abraham, the father of the faithful, and called Himself the God of Abraham and of his seed after him. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness ; and 'the Lord made a covenant with him, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.' And again, God tried him and found him not wanting either in faith or in works, when he was ready to offer up his only son Isaac ; therefore He spake to him from heaven, 'By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son : that in blessing I will bless thee, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed My voice.' And again God promised unto Isaac in Gerar, saying, 'I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father.' And yet again to Jacob, sleeping on the plains of Bethel, the Lord said, 'I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac ; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed.' They were then but a few in number, wandering from one country to another,

from Haran to Canaan, and from Canaan to Egypt, without any firm possession, even so much as of a burying-place. He rebuked for Abraham's sake, when he sojourned in their land, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and Abimelech, king of the Philistines, saying to Abimelech in a dream, 'Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know that thou shalt surely die, thou and all that are thine.' And again, He rebuked Laban for the sake of Jacob; for His providence is ever watchful over His elect.

16. Moreover, He called for a dearth upon the land : and destroyed all the provision of bread.

17. But He had sent a man before them : even Joseph, who was sold to be a bond-servant ;

18. Whose feet they hurt in the stocks : the iron entered into his soul ;

19. Until the time came that his cause was known : the word of the Lord tried him.

20. The king sent, and delivered him : the prince of the people let him go free.

21. He made him lord also of his house : and ruler of all his substance ;

22. That he might inform his princes after his will : and teach his senators wisdom.

Yet at the same time that He gave the promise

to Abraham and to his seed, He added a warning of those things by which He would try them, saying, 'Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them: and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge: and afterwards they shall come out with great substance.' And this His decree concerning them His all-ruling providence marvellously brought about,—by the envy of the sons of Jacob against Joseph their brother, by their selling him to the Midianites, by his being wrongfully accused by his wicked mistress, by his imprisonment in the dungeons of Pharaoh, by his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams, by his being raised to the second place in the kingdom, by his providing sustenance in abundance of corn and bread for the people, while Egypt and Canaan were afflicted with dearth and scarcity. And in all these things was Joseph not only an instrument in bringing about the before-determined course of providence, but he was also a type of Him Whom his brethren betrayed, and slew, and buried, and Who was raised from the dungeon of the grave to be Lord of all, and to teach all the earth the true wisdom. Yea, and shall not we, like the guilty sons of Israel, be ashamed and confounded in that day when Christ, the true Joseph, shall make Himself known unto us, and shall say, I am your Brother, Whom ye sold and crucified?

23. Israel also came into Egypt: and Jacob was a stranger in the land of Ham.

24. And He increased His people exceedingly : and made them stronger than their enemies ;

25. Whose heart turned so, that they hated His people : and dealt untruly with His servants.


First by the desire of buying food, and next by the longing to see Joseph once again, were Jacob and his children, with all their possessions, brought down into the land of Egypt. They dwelt in Goshen, and increased in numbers and strength, until a Pharaoh arose who knew not Joseph, and who had forgot how he had preserved the Egyptians from famine. Then this king oppressed the children of Israel, and made them slaves, slaying their male children, and making their lives bitter in toil and misery. Like man under the captivity of sin, so was Israel in the captivity of Egypt, left without any help or hope, except the working out of the before-ordained decrees of God's salvation.

26. Then sent He Moses His servant : and Aaron whom He had chosen.

27. And these shewed His tokens among them : and wonders in the land of Ham.

28. He sent darkness, and it was dark : and they were not obedient unto His word.

29. He turned their waters into blood : and slew their fish.

 30. Their land brought forth frogs : yea, even in their kings' chambers.

31. He spake the word, and there came all manner of flies : and lice in all their quarters.

32. He gave them hailstones for rain : and flames of fire in their land.

33. He smote their vines also and fig-trees : and destroyed the trees that were in their coasts.

34. He spake the word, and the grasshoppers came, and caterpillars innumerable : and did eat up all the grass in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.

35. He smote all the firstborn in their land : even the chief of all their strength.

At length the appointed time drew nigh that the people of the covenant should be delivered, and Egypt should be judged ; and God looked down and saw their oppression, and He sent Moses the prophet from the land of Midian, with Aaron the priest, his brother, to deliver them. By the mighty signs and wonders shewn upon Egypt, upon her gods, and upon her river, and her land, at last was the pride of Pharaoh brought down, and his hardness of heart was crushed. The tyrant had to eat of the fruit of his ways ; he who had slain the little ones of Israel, felt the loss of his own first-born by death : as he had done to others, so was it done to him.

36. He brought them forth also with silver

and gold : there was not one feeble person among their tribes.

37. Egypt was glad at their departing : for they were afraid of them.

Thus severely chastised, 'the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men.' And when Israel departed, strong in their God, though not in themselves, they exacted a tribute of the Egyptians, jewels of silver and jewels of gold, as conquerors exact a tribute of the conquered, 'and they spoiled the Egyptians.'

38. He spread out a cloud to be a covering : and fire to give light in the night-season.

39. At their desire He brought quails : and He filled them with the bread of heaven.

40. He opened the rock of stone, and the waters flowed out : so that rivers ran in the dry places.

Nor did the love of their God cease with their deliverance. The sign of His presence abode with them continually, in the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, which was a guide to them, and a shelter from their enemies. He led them towards the land which He had promised to them, giving them by the way tokens of His love, and foreshadowings and types of the sacraments of His grace; He filled them with the bread of heaven, the foretaste of the true Bread Who was to come as the Life of the

world. He gave them drink in the desert from the smitten rock of stone, 'and that rock was Christ.'

41. For why? He remembered His holy promise : and Abraham His servant.

42. And He brought forth His people with joy : and His chosen with gladness ;

43. And gave them the lands of the heathen : and they took the labours of the people in possession ;

44. That they might keep His statutes : and observe His laws.

And why were all these mercies shewn to Israel, and all these bounties showered upon them? Because they were the children of the promise, the people of the covenant. Because of the oath which God had sworn unto Abraham, did He bring his seed from Egypt, breaking their chains and comforting their sorrow, that He might lead them into the land of Canaan, flowing with milk and honey, and might give them fields which they tilled not, and cities which they had not built. He thus delivered them, He thus had mercy upon them, because He had chosen them to be His own, to know Him and serve Him, to 'keep His statutes and observe His laws.' The end of election is obedience. And we also, the members of the Church of Christ, the people of the second covenant, the true children of Abraham, the Israelites indeed, are delivered from the bondage of sin, and guided by grace, and refreshed by sacra-

ments, because we also are 'elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.'

This Psalm is closely connected with the following one; they form a pair. But the first of the two celebrates the dealings of God with His people, in accents of praise; the second relates the return which Israel made to God, in a tone of penitence. The 105th is a meditation on the covenant as performed on the part of God, the 106th on the covenant as kept by Israel. They both dwell on the predestinating will of God, electing men to holiness and obedience, and the mode in which human sin opposes itself to that will, and yet can not make it void. The short sententious style of the poetry of these Psalms, conveying the facts of the history of the people in the briefest form, and the best adapted for preservation in the memory, much resembles those inscriptions, as far as modern learning has been enabled to decipher them, which are found engraved on the rocks in the deserts of northern Arabia, and especially in the valley near Sinai, called the Wady Mokatteb, which are traditionally supposed to have been written there by the children of Israel in their wanderings. It may be noticed in connection with verse 36, that the word which in Exod. iii. 22, xii. 35, is translated "borrowed," should properly be rendered "exacted as tribute." The first fifteen verses of this Psalm form part of the hymn given by David to the singers of the temple, (1 Chron. xvi.)

Ebening Prayer.

PSALM cvi. *Confitemini Domino.*

1. O GIVE thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious : and His mercy endureth for ever.

2. Who can express the noble acts of the Lord : or shew forth all His praise ?

3. Blessed are they that alway keep judgment : and do righteousness.

4. Remember me, O Lord, according to the

favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people : O visit me with Thy salvation ;

5. That I may see the felicity of Thy chosen : and rejoice in the gladness of Thy people, and give thanks with Thine inheritance.

The continual grace and ever-enduring mercy of our God call forth our heartfelt thanks. We cannot sufficiently celebrate the glories of His goodness, or shew forth the full praise which is His due, for our spirits are too cold, our lives too brief, for that which is the office of angels during the eternal ages. But it is not the hearer, or the speaker, but the doer of God's will that is blessed in his deed ; nor is it enough to do righteousness for a little while : we require the gift of perseverance, ' for he that endureth to the end the same shall be saved.' Trying ourselves by this test, we soon fall from the exaltation of thankfulness to the abasement of prayer ; thinking on our sins and those of our fathers, we put away from us the voice of praise, and turn to confession and repentance, if perchance the God of grace and mercy will remember us, and visit us with His salvation, even the revealing of the Saviour, so that at last we may be among the true Israelites, and may enter into that heritage of rest and peace which He has promised to give unto His own elect.

6. We have sinned with our fathers : we have done amiss, and dealt wickedly.

7. Our fathers regarded not Thy wonders in Egypt, neither kept they Thy great good-

ness in remembrance : but were disobedient at the sea, even at the Red Sea.

8. Nevertheless, He helped them for His Name's sake : that He might make His power to be known.

9. He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up : so He led them through the deep, as through a wilderness.

10. And He saved them from the adversary's hand : and delivered them from the hand of the enemy.

11. As for those that troubled them, the waters overwhelmed them : there was not one of them left.

12. Then believed they His words : and sang praise unto Him.

As the graces and mercies shewn to Israel are pictures of those shewn to us, so their sins and doubts and disobediences are a lesson to us, and their repentances and confessions are a model to us. They looked back upon a long sad history of ingratitude and disobedience. We, like them, need to acknowledge that we have sinned with our fathers and have done wickedly. They remembered not their mighty Baptism in the waters of the Red Sea, when God in His power led them through its depths. How often do we forget the seal of our election? Yet they, when they were set free, at length believed in His words of love, and praised Him for His power and

goodness—‘Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?’

13. But within a while they forgat His works : and would not abide His counsel.

Heb. They hasted and forgat His works,
And waited not for His counsel.

14. But lust came upon them in the wilderness : and they tempted God in the desert.

15. And He gave them their desire : and sent leanness withal into their soul.

But in a most brief season they forgot the wonders He had done, and they would not wait in patience for the accomplishment of His Divine decree. They wearied of the food of heaven, and lusted for flesh to eat; and He sent the flight of quails, and gave them their desire,—and with it the chastisement of their sin.

16. They angered Moses also in the tents : and Aaron the saint of the Lord.

17. So the earth opened and swallowed up Dathan : and covered the congregation of Abiram.

18. And the fire was kindled in their company : the flame burnt up the ungodly.

Yet again they rebelled against Moses, and Aaron, whom the Lord had consecrated for His priest, and the earth opened and swallowed up the rebels of the

tribe of Reuben, while the fire fell from heaven upon the Levites, who joined in the gainsaying of Korah, and in ungodly resistance to God's appointed priests.

19. They made a calf in Horeb : and worshipped the molten image.

20. Thus they turned their glory : into the similitude of a calf that eateth hay.

21. And they forgot God their Saviour : Who had done so great things in Egypt ;

22. Wondrous works in the land of Ham : and fearful things by the Red Sea.

23. So He said He would have destroyed them, had not Moses His chosen stood before Him in the gap : to turn away His wrathful indignation, lest He should destroy them.

And under the very shadow of the Mount of God they made a calf of gold, and, forgetting their God and Saviour—forgetting the plagues wrought in Egypt for their deliverance, and the dividing of the waters for their escape, they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image in the likeness of a calf that eateth hay ; ‘ and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.’ Therefore would God have consumed them, had not Moses, like a warrior standing in the breach of his city's wall, striven against the Divine wrath with a mighty intercession,—‘ Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written.’

24. Yea, they thought scorn of that pleasant land : and gave no credence unto His word ;

25. But murmured in their tents : and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord.

26. Then lift He up His hand against them : to overthrow them in the wilderness ;

27. To cast out their seed among the nations : and to scatter them in the lands.

They disbelieved the report which Joshua and Caleb brought of the promised land ; and therefore were they doomed to die in the wilderness, and never to see its beauty and its fruitfulness ; and therefore did the Amalekites smite them, and Arad king of Canaan took some of them captives.

28. They joined themselves unto Baal-peor : and ate the offerings of the dead.

29. Thus they provoked Him to anger with their own inventions : and the plague was great among them.

30. Then stood up Phinees and prayed : and so the plague ceased.

Hob. Then arose Phinehas, and executed judgment.

31. And that was counted unto Him for righteousness : among all posterities for evermore.

Again, they became partakers in the hidden and impure rites of Baal, which were celebrated on the mountain of Peor, and they feasted on the sacrifices

which were made to the spirits of the dead heroes of Midian, to Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and to their infernal gods; and the anger of 'the living God' was kindled against them. Then Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, after prayer and weeping before the Lord, executed His judgment upon the idolaters and fornicators; and therefore to him was given 'the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.'

32. They angered Him also at the waters of strife : so that He punished Moses for their sakes ;

33. Because they provoked his spirit : so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

At Meribah, also, they angered God in their murmuring for want of water; and Moses, on their account, was not suffered to enter into the land of rest, for that he was provoked by their reproaches and their complaints, and said, 'Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?' And he struck the rock with his rod twice, when the command of God had been that he should speak unto it.

34. Neither destroyed they the heathen : as the Lord commanded them ;

35. But were mingled among the heathen : and learned their works.

36. Insomuch that they worshipped their idols, which turned to their own decay :

yea, they offered their sons and their daughters unto devils ;

37. And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters : whom they offered unto the idols of Canaan ; and the land was defiled with blood.

38. Thus were they stained with their own works : and went a whoring with their own inventions.

And after Joshua had led them into Canaan they drove not out the seven nations, the types of the seven deadly sins which possess the unregenerate soul : rather they made alliance with them, and worshipped their gods, which were devils and not gods, making their innocent little ones, their sons and their daughters, to pass through the fire to Moloch, in their infernal rites ; and so they defiled the land, which they should have made holy to the Lord, with filthiness, idolatry, and blood. Yea, they stained both their souls and bodies with their fleshly sins, being married to the momentary pleasures of iniquity, and divorced for ever from the love and holiness of God.

39. Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against His people : insomuch that He abhorred His own inheritance.

40. And He gave them over into the hand of the heathen : and they that hated them were lords over them.

41. Their enemies oppressed them : and had them in subjection.

42. Many a time did He deliver them : but they rebelled against Him with their own inventions, and were brought down in their wickedness.

Therefore for their rebellion against the Lord God, Who was their King, He gave them over to tyrants and oppressors; and the Amalekites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, whom they ought to have destroyed, oppressed them and made them captives and slaves. Their God raised up Judges who delivered them again and again; and yet too often they fell back again into wickedness, and so into its punishment.

43. Nevertheless, when He saw their adversity : He heard their complaint.

44. He thought upon His covenant, and pitied them, according unto the multitude of His mercies : yea, He made all those that led them away captive to pity them.

LXX. He gave them to compassions,
Before all those who took them captive.

Yet though they forgot their duty, He forgot not His own mercy. He ever heard their prayer in their trouble, as He ever hears all prayer: a broken and contrite heart He never will despise. He bore in mind His covenant which He had sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and He righteously kept it in all its fulness, while the seed of Abraham with whom

it was made brake it in all its conditions. Yet His righteousness is not as ours, it is perfect mercy and perfect love; and in that righteousness did He pity them, and made even their conquerors to feel compassion for their misery.

45. Deliver us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen : that we may give thanks unto Thy holy Name, and make our boast of Thy praise.

Thus step by step in the fortunes of Israel, and the dealings of their God, may we trace the progress of many a Christian soul. Delivered from the slavery of sin, baptized into newness of life, led by the teaching of God's commandments through the wilderness of the world, fed with food from heaven, and refreshed with living water, it yet forsakes its mercies and breaks its covenant; it neglects to destroy those deadly sins which its Lord hath given it in charge to slay; it joins in alliance with them, and learns their works; it becomes again their slave and captive, and can only be made free by bitter penitence and tears. Oh turn we to Him Whose mercy is ever over us; beseech we the Father of everlasting compassion to forsake not us feeble Israelites, whom He has brought so far out of Egypt, but to help our poor and wandering souls that they faint not, neither turn from the right way; that they forget not His covenant, and fall not from His grace! Pray we to Him to deliver all who confess His Name from the power of sin and the chain of ignorance, that they ever give thanks 'with the

remnant of the true Israelites, one fold under one Shepherd.'

46. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and world without end : and let all the people say, Amen.

Heb. And all the people say, Amen. Hallelujah.

Therefore, to that Lord God of Israel, Who keepeth His covenant and mercy for ever, even the covenant of redemption and of salvation which He hath made with His Church, established on earth by the hand of the eternal Mediator, and accomplished in Heaven in the glorifying of His saints,—to Him be ascribed blessing and praise which shall never cease, in which all the peoples of the earth shall join, who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They who begin with the Amen of faith and prayer here, shall end with the Hallelujah of immortal joy and praise.

The connection of this Psalm with the preceding one has already been pointed out. This is an exhortation to penitence and confession, as that was to gratitude and obedience. It goes over the history of Israel's disobedience in the wilderness, as the seventy-eighth Psalm does, though with a different object. The spiritual comment on this history is given by St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 1—12). It is difficult to fix the period of the composition of these two Psalms, which have no title; but we notice what clear witness they bear to the narrative of Moses in Numbers and Deuteronomy. It is probable that both of them were written to be used at the solemn celebration of the Passover. In this Psalm compare verses 12, with Ex. xiv. 31; 16, with Numb. xi. 16; 20, with Rom. i. 23; 24, with Numb. xiii. 33; 30, 31, with Numb. xxv. 7, 12; and 32, with Numb. xx. 13. This Psalm concludes the fourth book.

THE FIFTH DIVISION OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

PS. CVII.—CL.

THE last of the five books of the Psalms is not concluded as the other books are, by an ascription of praise to God, unless the whole of Psalm cl. may be considered as standing in the place of such an ascription. It merely ends with the word 'Hallelujah,'—a word of which the whole Psalter is but the expanding and the commentary.

The fifty-three Psalms of which it is made up are varied in their character. Many of them are by David; and others are Psalms of the captivity and of the restoration. Among them we may notice particularly, I. Psalm cxiii. and the five which follow it, which make up what the Jews call 'the Greater Hallel,' and were solemnly sung on the night of the Passover by those who had joined in eating the paschal lamb. These Psalms, no doubt, formed the very hymn which was sung by the Saviour and His apostles at the last Supper, of which the Evangelists speak,—'And when they had sung an hymn they went out into the mount of Olives,' (St. Matt. xxvi. 30; St. Mark xiv. 26). II. Psalm cxix., which consists of twenty-two parts, of eight verses each, after the number of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet,—each of the eight verses of the first part beginning with *Aleph*, each of the second part with *Beth*, and so on

in succession; from which this Psalm has received the name of 'the Great Alphabet.' And III. the fifteen short hymns (cxx.—cxxxiv.) which immediately follow Psalm cxix., and which are entitled, in our translation, the 'Psalms of Degrees.' These are, literally, the 'Psalms of the goings up,' and were, it seems probable, those which were chanted by the pilgrims who went up each year to Jerusalem to keep the great festivals, as they journeyed along. And the Psalms in this division are generally, if we allow weight to the opinion of Bp. Horsley, of a liturgical character. The book itself was, there is no doubt, compiled after the return from the captivity, when the whole Book of the Psalms was finally arranged in the canon of Scripture by the great Synagogue, in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

THE FIFTH DIVISION.

Morning Prayer.

FOR THE THANKSGIVING AFTER A STORM AT SEA.

PSALM cvii. *Confitemini Domino.*

1. O GIVE thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious : and His mercy endureth for ever.

2. Let them give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed : and delivered from the hand of the enemy ;

3. And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west : from the north, and from the south.

After we are delivered from peril, we are for awhile ready enough to thank the Lord of grace and the Father of everlasting mercy. But each new deliverance should stir up the redeemed soul to remember all that it has been delivered from. Each display of mercy to each one is but a portion of that mercy and loving care which the Lord God has ever had for all our fallen race. Let each soul give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed, through the blood of the Only-begotten, and hath delivered from the hand of Satan, and the power of its own sinfulness, and bless and praise Him with a glowing heart, like Israel

returning from their dispersion, and their seventy years' captivity in Babylon. Our Shiloh is come, and unto Him is the gathering of the people. Christ our Lord hath redeemed us, and hath brought us from the east and the west, the north and the south, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God; wanderers in the corners of the earth, and dwellers in the isles of the sea, He hath brought us into His Church, into His peace, into His joy, into Himself.

4. They went astray in the wilderness out of the way : and found no city to dwell in ;

5. Hungry and thirsty : their soul fainted in them.

6. So they cried unto the Lord in their trouble : and He delivered them from their distress.

7. He led them forth by the right way : that they might go to the city where they dwelt.

Like Israel in the pathless desert, wandering with no certain dwelling-place, seeking, for forty long years, a city, but finding none, weary with travel, fainting and spiritless with thirst and hunger, crying at last to their God, for that all human aid had left them, and finding in Him a supply for all their cravings, and a guide to the land He had sworn to give them, and a leader to His holy city, which was to be theirs; just so, in their ignorance and natural blindness, the race of men have gone astray from the

living way—have sought for a home, but found it not, —have hungered after the real good, and thirsted for the true pleasure, which only could satisfy the longings of their immortal soul, and have found only weariness, sorrow, and death, until the dumb cry of their spirit in their trouble found its answer from the God of truth; and He came to lead them in the right way of His Gospel, and to bring them to the city that hath her foundations in eternity. He hath made us free citizens of no mean city, even of the Jerusalem which is above;—and ‘with how great a sum obtained He this freedom’ for us!

8. O that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness : and declare the wonders that He doeth for the children of men !

9. For He satisfieth the empty soul : and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

Therefore from them who, being in ignorance, He has led, who, being in error, He has guided right, He will have a payment made,—the payment of loving gratitude and thankful acknowledgment of His goodness, and of His wondrous grace. Those who are of themselves empty He filleth with His grace; those that are hungering after good He satisfieth with the true righteousness, even with Himself. He giveth them the true Bread from heaven, and all He would have in return is that they should receive it ‘with gladness and singleness of heart.’

10. Such as sit in darkness, and in the sha-

dow of death : being fast bound in misery and iron ;

11. Because they rebelled against the words of the Lord : and lightly regarded the counsel of the most Highest ;

12. He also brought down their heart through heaviness : they fell down, and there was none to help them.

13. So when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble : He delivered them out of their distress.

14. For He brought them out of darkness, and out of the shadow of death : and brake their bonds in sunder.

Like Israel in the dungeons of Babylon, sitting bound in darkness both of body and of spirit, waiting seventy cruel years for death, and fettered with despair no less than with chains of iron ; suffering dire punishment for their rebellion against their God in the worshipping of idols, and for their neglect of His law and their forgetfulness of His covenant ; crushed down to the very earth in heaviness of heart, and helpless and hopeless in their depth of misery, until at last their groaning came up to their Lord, and He brought the years of their captivity to an end, and raised them out of their prison of oppression and dread, and loosed their chains, and set them free ;—just so was man ‘brought into captivity to the law of sin,’ lying in darkness and despair, tied and bound

with the noisome chain of his own lusts and fleshly appetites, in the dungeon of a polluted conscience, with the one weary cry, 'O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?' until the God of holiness had compassion upon him, and came down to deliver him from that galling chain by His forgiveness and His grace.

15. O that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness : and declare the wonders that He doeth for the children of men.

16. For He hath broken the gates of brass : and smitten the bars of iron in sunder.

Should not they whom, being bound, He has set free, whom, being guilty, He has absolved, use their freedom to serve their Lord ? He wrought marvelously indeed, in rising from the dead, in bursting the grave's gates of brass, and smiting the iron bars of death in sunder ! But He doth a marvel calling for no less wonder and no less praise, each time He breaks the chain of sin, saying to a sinner, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee ; go in peace.'

17. Foolish men are plagued for their offence : and because of their wickedness.

18. Their soul abhorred all manner of meat : and they were even hard at death's door.

19. So when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble : He delivered them out of their distress.

20. He sent His word, and healed them : and they were saved from their destruction.

There are those who, for their wrong-doing and wickedness, 'that they may know that wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished,' are smitten with some grievous disease,—as they were who were bitten by the fiery serpents in the wilderness,—and when their pain is sore upon them the sweetest food becomes distasteful, and they seem drawing nigh to the gates of death ; yet even in that sad strait there is a help and a refuge in Him in Whose hand are the issues of life and of death. They pray to Him, and He speaks the word, and they are healed. This, too, was a fit image of the state of fallen man, infected with a deep corruption of his whole nature, weak through the infirmity of the flesh, and near indeed to spiritual death. But the eternal Word was sent from heaven, and healed our corruption, and raised us up from death : 'Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses ;' yea, the Life Himself came among us, and was one with us ; and at His very presence the wounds of our souls are closed up, and the sores of our corrupted consciences are healed. We look to Him and are saved.

21. O that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness : and declare the wonders that He doeth for the children of men !

22. That they would offer unto Him the

sacrifice of thanksgiving : and tell out His works with gladness !

For this, therefore,—the giving of health and strength to our weak and corrupted nature—should not our souls praise Him, and proclaim His miracles of healing? Should we not, like the leper made clean again, go unto His courts and offer unto Him the sacrifice of thanksgiving before His holy altar for a testimony of His wonder-working love?

23. They that go down to the sea in ships : and occupy their business in great waters ;

24. These men see the works of the Lord : and His wonders in the deep.

25. For at His word the stormy wind ariseth : which lifteth up the waves thereof.

26. They are carried up to the heaven, and down again to the deep : their soul melteth away because of the trouble.

27. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man : and are at their wit's end.

28. So when they cry unto the Lord in their trouble : He delivereth them out of their distress.

29. For He maketh the storm to cease : so that the waves thereof are still.

30. Then are they glad, because they are at rest : and so He bringeth them unto the haven where they would be.

Once more, there are those who sail over the sea in ships,—as did Jonah the prophet, when he fled to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord,—these see the awful mightiness of God unshrouded and set plain before them. He bids the storm to arise, and they and their courage are as nothing before it; they are lifted on high and carried down again; their thoughts are no firmer than their feet; they are filled with terror at their danger and their own sheer helplessness before it. They cry, like the disciples to the Saviour on the sea of Tiberias, ‘Lord, save us; we perish;’ and He hears their calling and silences the storm, and brings them unharmed to the haven where they desire to be. Just thus are our unchastened hearts tost in the storm of passion, and by the waves of this troublesome world. The strife of anger rages and swells within us; ‘without are fightings, within are fears;’ at one while pride carries us up to heaven, and again despair sinks us down into the deep. Fear melts away our very soul; and suspicion, and doubt, and restlessness fill us with their miserable intoxication, until our power of judgment and of self-control is utterly gone, and in the tempest of temptation we are well-nigh cast away. Then He alone Who stills the storm can save us from making shipwreck of faith and peace, and can, by the gentle breathing of the Holy Ghost, bring to that haven of perfect rest whither all our longings and our yearnings tend.

31. O that men would therefore praise

the Lord for His goodness : and declare the wonders that He doeth for the children of men !

32. That they would exalt Him also in the congregation of the people : and praise Him in the seat of the elders !

For this, therefore,—the giving to us peace, the saying to us, ‘Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid;’ the assurance, ‘I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;’ the promise, ‘I will send unto you another Comforter,’—the members of His Church on earth must return Him plenteous praise; telling of His love to all the peoples of the earth, expounding His truth as a faithful teacher, and setting forth the doctrine of His salvation to all who will learn its preciousness. For this the voice of His Church must ‘bless with the Spirit’ in the mighty congregation of all created things, and there shall the nations of the world ‘say Amen, at her giving of thanks.’

33. Who turneth the floods into a wilderness : and drieth up the water-springs.

34. A fruitful land maketh He barren : for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.

35. Again, He maketh the wilderness a standing water : and water-springs of a dry ground.

36. And there He setteth the hungry : that they may build them a city to dwell in ;

37. That they may sow their land, and plant vineyards : to yield them fruits of increase.

38. He blesseth them, so that they multiply exceedingly : and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

It is sin that brings down the chastisements of God, whether upon a single soul, a nation, or a Church. The land of Gomorrah was parched up and consumed, though it was once beautiful as Eden, for the wickedness of its dwellers; the Church of Israel, though delivered from Egypt and brought back from Babylon, yet had her springs of grace dried up and became a thorny wilderness, for her rejection of her true High-priest and King. Again, the Gentiles, whose hearts were once arid and fruitless as the sandy desert, were brought near to the water of life, and being made children of their heavenly Father in the water-springs of holy baptism, were received into the holy city of the Church of Christ; their cravings for life were satisfied,—their work in the vineyard of God was given them to do,—‘the Spirit of God was poured upon them from on high,’ and they were made capable of bringing forth the fruit of good works to the glory and praise of God. Yea, He hath indeed blessed the Church into which He called the Gentiles, and hath multiplied and will multiply her children exceedingly, and will speed the labours of her ministers for the conversion of the world.

39. And again, when they are minished, and brought low : through oppression, through any plague, or trouble ;

40. Though He suffer them to be evil intreated through tyrants : and let them wander out of the way in the wilderness ;

Heb. He poureth contempt upon rulers.

41. Yet helpeth He the poor out of misery : and maketh him households like a flock of sheep.

Again, though His Church be brought low in chastisement for her cleaving to the powers of the world instead of to the grace of her Redeemer ; though, through her want of love, her unity be broken and her true children become few,—yet, through all, her Lord is over her. He will rebuke her oppressors, however powerful they may be ; He will bring her, when she humbleth herself and repenteth, out of her misery and her want, and will shew Himself ever the good Shepherd, Who layeth down His life for the salvation of His sheep, and gathereth the poor into one fold and one family, ‘in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.’

42. The righteous will consider this, and rejoice : and the mouth of all wickedness shall be stopped.

43. Whoso is wise will ponder these things : and they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.

These mighty doings of our Saviour and our God in delivering His feeble creatures from the trackless wilderness of error,—from the noisome chain of carnal lust,—from the deadly sickness of a corrupt nature,—and from the wild tempest of earthly passion, deserve the thoughtful joy of all who would be faithful servants of their Lord. The mouth of unbelief and the excuses of iniquity are stopped by the sight of the marvels of that mercy which endureth for ever. ‘The accuser of the brethren’ is silenced and cast down. The truly wise will ponder these things, for in the knowledge of them is true wisdom; and so pondering, there shall open before them, ever plainer, fuller, clearer, brighter, the revelation of that mighty love of their eternal Father which surpasses all understanding, and is vaster than all thought.

This is clearly a Psalm of the restoration from the captivity, written on the return from Babylon, before the building of the second temple. It celebrates the love and enduring mercy of God, describing Israel, and under the figure of Israel the whole race of man, under four parables. The first two of these—the perishing in the desert and the mourning in prison—are taken from the history of Israel; the other two, of sickness and shipwreck, are from the general experience of man. To each of these parables there are affixed two verses of exhortation to thanksgiving and gratitude, and these were doubtless sung in response, like an antiphone, by another portion of the choir. This noble and touching Psalm has no title in the Hebrew; it was written by a prophet who had read deeply in the prophecies of Isaiah. The Syriac translation gives as a title, “God collects the Jews out of captivity, and brings them back from Babylon: the Only-begotten Son of God also, Jesus Christ, collects the nations from the four corners of the earth, by calling upon men to be baptized.” This Psalm is appointed by the Church of England to be used in the Thanksgiving after a storm at sea.

Ebening Prayer.

FOR ASCENSION-DAY.

PSALM cviii. *Paratum cor meum.*

1. O God, my heart is ready, my heart is ready : I will sing and give praise with the best member that I have.

2. Awake, thou lute, and harp : I myself will awake right early.

3. I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the people : I will sing praises unto Thee among the nations.

4. For Thy mercy is greater than the heavens : and Thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.

5. Set up Thyself, O God, above the heavens : and Thy glory above all the earth.

All readiness of heart and voice, of thankfulness and of melody, become that triumphant day when the Son of God, in the glory of mercy and truth, ascended above the heavens, passed beyond the clouds, and sat down, an Almighty King, on the right hand of the throne of God.

6. That Thy beloved may be delivered : let Thy right hand save them, and hear Thou me.

7. God hath spoken in His holiness : I will rejoice therefore, and divide Sichem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.

8. Gilead is mine, and Manasses is mine : Ephraim also is the strength of my head.

9. Judah is my law-giver, Moab is my wash-pot : over Edom will I cast out my shoe ; upon Philistia will I triumph.

10. Who will lead me into the strong city : and who will bring me into Edom ?

11. Hast not Thou forsaken us, O God : and wilt not Thou, O God, go forth with our hosts ?

12. O help us against the enemy : for vain is the help of man.

13. Through God we shall do great acts : and it is He that shall tread down our enemies.

He, the second David, had accomplished His warfare and had crowned Himself with victory. Thenceforth He would apportion the kingdoms of the world, and subdue them unto Himself at His own holy will. Ephraim and Judah, Moab and Philistia, the Jew first and then the Gentile, were to be brought to confess Him as their Lord. He Who came victorious from Edom, and with garments dyed in the blood of His Passion from Bozrah, will henceforth now go forth with the armies of the true Israel,—for what are hosts without the Lord of hosts?—to subdue their enemy. The strong city built in the rock, even man's hardened heart, stronger and more stony than the tomb, He had conquered and overcome ; and in Him and His might are His people to carry on His

warfare, and to cast down all the strongholds of human pride, and human stubbornness, and human unrepentance.

This "Song or Psalm of David," which is appointed for Ascension-day, is made up of portions of two other Psalms. The first five verses form the latter portion of the fifty-seventh Psalm, and the latter eight are taken from the sixteenth. The comments and notes, therefore, on those Psalms are to be consulted. This joyous and triumphant battle-song would well express the exultation of the people after their return from captivity; and it is possible that on that account it occupies the position which it does among the Psalms of the captivity and the return.

PSALM cix. *Deus laudum.*

1. HOLD not Thy tongue, O God of my praise : for the mouth of the ungodly, yea, the mouth of the deceitful is opened upon me.

2. And they have spoken against me with false tongues : they compassed me about also with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause.

3. For the love that I had unto them, lo, they take now my contrary part : but I give myself unto prayer.

Heb. For my love they are my haters ;
And I am prayer.

4. Thus have they rewarded me evil for good : and hatred for my good will.

Were not these words, which were the appeal of David unto God when he suffered from the malice of Doeg and of Cush, and the tyranny of Saul, also

the prayer of the Son of Man in that season of trouble and blasphemy through which He passed ere He ended His work of redemption? His prayer was, 'O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was!' He appealed to the God of righteousness, and of holiness, from the power of unrighteous and deceitful men. He had come to them in the perfection of good, and they had received Him with the perfection of evil. 'They had sought false witness against Him, to put Him to death.' They had reviled Him,—'Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil.' 'They sought how they might kill Him;' and when the son of perdition, Judas Iscariot, communed with them, 'how he might betray Him unto them, they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.' Thus did the seed of Judah pay back the debt they owed to Him Who gave them all: this was their obedience to their King—this their return for the love of Him Who came to save them, Who for them, and for their sins, had made His whole being one act of intercession and of sacrifice, Whose life on earth was one long prayer. They returned Him cursing for His blessing, hatred for His love, scourging and wounds for His healing and His benefits, death upon the cross for the offer of life eternal.

5. Set Thou an ungodly man to be ruler over him : and let Satan stand at his right hand.

6. When sentence is given upon him, let

him be condemned : and let his prayer be turned into sin.

7. Let his days be few : and let another take his office.

They followed after Judas the traitor : ' he was the guide to them that took Jesus ; ' and as they followed him in his terrible crime, no less so were they, by the just judgment of God, to follow him in his terrible doom. ' Satan entered into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.' The devil was the guide of Judas, and Judas was the guide of the Church of Israel. The sentence of blood-guiltiness went forth against him, from the throne of outraged truth and right. He was condemned—yea, self-condemned. He repented too late ; for his repentance was without the Saviour. He prayed in vain, for his prayer was but sin. That which he might have had—the glory of the apostleship, the bishopric of the Church, the crown of the martyr, the throne of glory—all these he had cast away, even as he cast down the thirty pieces of silver, which had been their price. He that falls short of the greatest good falls into the greatest sin. Thus was ' this Scripture fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus ; for he was numbered with the apostles, and had obtained part of their ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity ; and falling headlong he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem ; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein ; and his bishopric let another take.'

8. Let his children be fatherless : and his wife a widow.

9. Let his children be vagabonds, and beg their bread : let them seek it also out of desolate places.

10. Let the extortioner consume all that he hath : and let the stranger spoil his labour.

11. Let there be no man to pity him : nor to have compassion upon his fatherless children.

12. Let his posterity be destroyed : and in the next generation let his name be clean put out.

13. Let the wickedness of his fathers be had in remembrance in the sight of the Lord : and let not the sin of his mother be done away.

14. Let them alway be before the Lord : that He may root out the memorial of them from off the earth ;

15. And that, because his mind was not to do good : but persecuted the poor helpless man, that he might slay him that was vexed at the heart.

As there came upon Judas all fearful and awful forms of punishment—remorse, and destruction, and death, both of body and soul, so that it ‘had been better for him that he had never been born,’—so against the Church of Israel, which joined with him in his unbelief and treachery, and took their share in his sin, ‘did the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, speak’ these fearful things, forerunners of that last tremendous curse whereby it shall be said to the lost for ever, ‘Depart, ye cursed.’ The curse that came upon them, and which comes upon all unbelief, treachery, malice, falsehood, cruelty, and pride, was the loss of the blessing. For before God, they that are not blessed are cursed, they that are not on the right hand are on the left. The Saviour would have gathered them to Himself, and they would not; He would have given them the true bread from heaven, and they cast it from them; He would have made them rich with the true riches, and they would none of them; He would have pitied them and had mercy on them, but they had made their hearts hard against Him; He would have cleansed all their sin, and the sin of their fathers, and they cried ‘His blood be on us and on our children.’ Therefore they were made the prey of the Roman extortioner; they were scattered abroad by the Roman armies; they were crucified, and slaughtered by the Roman sword; they who had priced their Saviour’s blood at thirty pieces of silver were themselves sold as slaves, thirty for one piece of silver; their city was utterly destroyed,—Jerusalem has been trodden down of the

Roman, the Saracen, and the Turk. Their King, of Whom they became the betrayers and murderers, has come not to them again : but His words have been accomplished in them, that upon them has come the vengeance of ‘all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, to the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom they slew between the temple and the altar.’

16. His delight was in cursing, and it shall happen unto him : he loved not blessing, therefore shall it be far from him.

17. He clothed himself with cursing, like as with a raiment : and it shall come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.

18. Let it be unto him as the cloke that he hath upon him : and as the girdle that he is alway girded withal.

19. Let it thus happen from the Lord unto mine enemies : and to those that speak evil against my soul.

For they not only rejected Him Who is the truth, but reviled Him. The Jews ‘said unto Him, Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?’ ‘They said, Behold a Man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.’ And the blaspheming Pharisees, when they heard of His healing the blind and dumb, said, ‘This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.’ They cried, ‘Not this man, but Barabbas.’

They loved cursing, and they had what they loved. They counted their King, Who should have been their blessing, a Samaritan, and He became a stranger, and an alien unto them. 'They saw and hated both Him and His Father.' The evil that they had indulged, the malice that they had cherished, closed round them and entered into them; it was within them, like the bitter water of jealousy, 'that causeth the curse;' it penetrated their inmost soul, like the marrow within their bones. It was over them and round them, like their inner and their outer raiment; it was close round their heart, like the girdle with which they were girded. They had made evil their element, and blasphemy their habit, until that most woeful of all words went forth against them, from the lips of Him Who could not lie: 'Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.'

20. But deal Thou with me, O Lord God, according unto Thy Name : for sweet is Thy mercy.

21. O deliver me, for I am helpless and poor : and my heart is wounded within me.

22. I go hence like the shadow that de-

parteth : and am driven away as the grasshopper.

23. My knees are weak through fasting : my flesh is dried up for want of fatness.

LXX. My flesh is changed for the anointing.

24. I became also a reproach unto them : they that looked upon me shook their heads.

Yet the malice and the spite of man changed not the Saviour's purpose of eternal mercy. He gave Himself up to His Father's will amid all the hindrances of mortal hatefulness and neglect. His prayer was, 'Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.' His holy soul was wounded to its inmost depths by the wickedness of Israel and by the treachery of Judas: at the Last Supper, when He sat with His disciples for the last time on earth, 'He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.' Yea, He was betrayed and He was crucified, Who left the bosom of God to become as we are, and to dwell with us, creatures short-lived and vanishing like the shadow at sun-set,—helpless as the locust driven before the strong west wind,—feeble and uncertain in our aspirings to heaven, like the grasshopper that, from its brief leap upwards, falls quickly back to the earth again. He fasted for us, not only in the forty days of the temptation, but through all His life, and yet

was He mocked by us, when they who passed by His cross 'railed on Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself, and come down from the cross.'

25. Help me, O Lord my God : O save me according to Thy mercy ;

26. And they shall know, how that this is Thy hand : and that Thou, Lord, hast done it.

27. Though they curse, yet bless Thou : and let them be confounded that rise up against me ; but let Thy servant rejoice.

28. Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame : and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a cloke.

'Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, they took, and by wicked hands crucified and slew : ' and yet He, trusting in His Father's love, and doing His Father's will, prayed for them, His murderers—returning blessing for cursing—and said, even as their nails pierced through His flesh, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' He looked forward, from amid the blasphemous crowd of His most unrighteous judges and accusers, to that day when all evil shall be confounded with immortal shame, and be doomed to everlasting contempt, and patience and goodness shall eternally be glorified. 'When He shall come with clouds ; and every eye shall see

Him, and they also who pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen.'

29. As for me, I will give great thanks unto the Lord with my mouth : and praise Him among the multitude ;

30. For He shall stand at the right hand of the poor : to save his soul from unrighteous judges.

Therefore in all reviling and ingratitude, in all evil return for love, and in all persecution for truth and righteousness' sake, must the followers of the Crucified trust in Him, confess Him, and praise Him. They who are evil-intreated are made like their Master: 'if they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household.' But He who was mocked and spitefully intreated will not leave those who suffer for His cause. He will be with them, to help and to save them, as He was with St. Stephen in the unjust Sanhedrim. Even as Satan stood at the right hand of Judas, and standeth at the right hand of all the ungodly, the covetous, and the malicious, so does Christ stand at the right hand of each one of His afflicted servants, to comfort him in his poverty, and to lead him into glory. He Who said unto Israel of old, 'Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?' said also to His own,

‘Blessed be ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God.’

This Psalm was written by David, doubtless during his sufferings from the causeless cruelty of Saul and the wanton malice of those who calumniated him. But we are expressly told by St. Peter, that “the Holy Ghost spake it by the mouth of David concerning Judas,” (Acts i. 16). It has been also applied by the fathers and earlier commentators to the Church of Judah, which made itself an accomplice in the sin of Judas; and they have considered it as a denunciation of righteous vengeance, proceeding from the mouth of Christ, in the season of His passion, against the wickedness, and hypocrisy, and blood-guiltiness of His betrayers and murderers. (Compare carefully, St. Matt. xxiii. throughout, and also the fearful denunciations in Deut. xxviii. 15—68.) Its awful words may, however, be extended beyond this, and be considered not only as a prophecy of the retribution which should overtake some particular sinners and hypocrites, but as a plain-spoken declaration of that most just doom which the righteous providence of God is ever working out for all those who take pleasure in wrong and falsehood. It warns us that our God is severe as well as good, (Rom. xi. 22); and that He has determined that it shall not be with the wicked as with the righteous, (Gen. xviii. 25.) Seen in this light, the warnings of this terrible Psalm must have brought unspeakable support to those seven thousand who bowed not the knee to Baal under the impious tyranny of Ahab and Jezebel, and to the captive Jews under Belshazzar, as well as to all who have suffered from the oppression and tyranny of the wilfully wicked. This is the only Psalm in which the spirit of evil is mentioned by name. (Compare verse 5 with Job 1 and Zech. iii. 1.)

Morning Prayer.

FOR CHRISTMAS-DAY.

PSALM CX. *Dixit Dominus.*

1. THE Lord said unto my Lord : Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.

2. The Lord shall send the rod of Thy power out of Sion : be Thou ruler, even in the midst among Thine enemies.

The Holy Ghost sheweth unto us by the voices of prophets, and in the message of the Gospel, One from among the sons of men Whose form yet is as the Son of God. David saw in prophetic vision One sprung from himself, and yet far above himself, sitting, not upon an earthly throne, but ‘overcoming and sitting down with His Father on His throne ;’—One that was to be born in the city of Bethlehem, of the house and lineage of David, and yet placed upon the right hand of God, the Lord of angels and of men, the Lord of all the earth, the Lord of all that is, that hath been, or that shall be. The seat of Whose kingdom was in a loftier and a holier place than the earthly Sion, and Whose sceptre of dominion cast its shadow across the universe ; and yet that shadow was the shadow of the Cross. Mighty marvel and most strange mystery, which He only can make clear concerning Whom it first was spoken ! ‘Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, How say the Scribes that Christ is the Son of David ? For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. David, therefore, himself calleth Him Lord ; and whence is He then his Son ?’ To this what shall we say—that He is not then the Son of David ? Let the beginning of the Gospel of St. Matthew answer us : it is ‘the book of

the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.' But is He therefore not the Lord of David? Let the beginning of the Gospel of St. John reply: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' In Him, at once the Son of God and the Son of Man, do all wonders join; He hath taken the manhood into God, Who said, 'I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star.' Yea, the Firstborn of our nature, at once our brother and our Lord, is on the very throne of God, honoured by the everlasting Father with a seat at His right hand, waiting while, one by one, all things dark, sinful, evil, vile, and deadly are crushed beneath His feet; holding a sceptre which sways all consciences and souls; and bidden,—not to be a conqueror in the midst among His slaughtered foes,—but to be a ruler exercising a merciful dominion over rebels who have repented and obeyed.

3. In the day of Thy power shall the people offer Thee free-will offerings with an holy worship : the dew of Thy birth is of the womb of the morning.

Heb. Thy people shall offer free-will offerings
In Thy day of might, in holy beauty.
More than from the womb of the morning
Is the dew of Thy offspring.

LXX. With Thee is the dominion in the day of Thy power,
In the shining brightness of Thy saints.
From the womb before the morning-star have I be-
gotten Thee.

In the day of His power, when His kingdom of grace is come, His people, the Church of His redeemed, shall offer before Him the free-will offering of 'themselves, their souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Him.' And with the offering of themselves shall they offer before Him that unbloody sacrifice of which the prophet spake, saying, 'In every place incense shall be offered unto Thy Name, and a pure offering;' and which He Himself hath commanded to be offered, saying, 'Do this in remembrance of Me.' Clad in holy garments, praying with holy worship, they shall be joined in holy communion with each other and with their Lord. The children of God shall be no longer few in number, but shall be many in their multitude as the drops of dew that shine unnumbered upon the grass-blades in the freshness of the early morning. Sprinkled with the dew of holy baptism, born of water and of the Spirit, made heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ the eternally-begotten Son, His elect shall shine, on the morning of the Resurrection-day, in Him and with Him Who is the bright and morning Star, yet Whose birth-cradle at Bethlehem was chilled with the dew-drops of Christmas morning.

4. The Lord sware, and will not repent :
Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of
Melchisedech.

And our Lord is not only a King over His people, seated upon the throne of God, but is also a High-

priest interceding for ever for them within the veil of the eternal Holy of holies. He is at once a Priest and King even as was Melchisedech of old, who was 'the king of Salem and priest of the Most High God.' He gave to Abraham, the father of the faithful, the gift of bread and wine—prophetic of the future giving of Christ's body and blood; and he blessed him, and to him Abraham gave a tenth part of all his spoils. He, even Melchisedech, was 'by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is, king of peace: who, without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.' There was established under the first law a priesthood of the seed of Aaron, from the tribe of Levi; but when the first law was fulfilled in the second, another and a more glorious Priest was consecrated, not by man, but by the oath of Almighty God, Whose genealogy was not of earth, but of heaven, and Whose priesthood should be not for a time, but for evermore. God, the Unchangeable and the Undeceiving, swore this unto Him,—yet not for His sake, but for ours, whom He 'hath made kings and priests unto God and His Father,' that we might know and believe that to us, even as to the beloved Son, 'the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.' For this cause, 'This Priest was made with an oath by Him that said unto Him, The Lord swear, and will not repent: Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech.' He offereth ever that one spotless Vic-

tim, even Himself, within the eternal temple; 'for such an High-priest became us, Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.'

5. The Lord upon Thy right hand : shall wound even kings in the day of His wrath.

6. He shall judge among the heathen ; He shall fill the places with the dead bodies : and smite in sunder the heads over divers countries.

To the everlasting Father, Who hath said unto the Son, 'Sit Thou on My right hand,' and Who hath sworn unto Him, and will not repent, 'Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech,' is all praise and worship due, and to the Only-begotten Son, our Priest and King, Who sitteth for ever at His right hand, and 'Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things.' All nations shall bow before the Lord of all; all peoples shall fear the wrath of the Lamb, when His power and His judgment is made fully manifest. It is His to kill and to make alive, for 'He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.' He Who hath bruised the serpent's head shall mortify and kill all vice, and sin, and pride. Antichrist and all his powers shall be struck down before Him; all that is lofty, and strong, and powerful throughout all the countries of the earth, if it will not come under the obedience of Christ, shall be crushed and smitten in sunder by the Conqueror over death and sin. None in the day of His

wrath shall presume to ask Him, Art Thou a King? None shall dare then to say, We have no King.

7. He shall drink of the brook in the way : therefore shall He lift up His head.

Our King hath reigned because He served ; our Priest is heard in that He feared. He took our nature ; He became weak and toil-worn as a pilgrim in the way of this mortal life ; He sat thirsting by the way-side well of Jacob ; He tasted of all that there is of turbid, of bitter, and of disappointing in the torrent of human feelings and human trials, the ceaseless onward flow of man's mortality ; He drank deep of the fountain of tears ; He stooped down at length to the waters of death,—‘Therefore shall He lift up His head.’ Because He once was poor, He now is rich ; because He once lay in a manger, He now sitteth on the throne ; because He once was weary, He is now entered into the fulness of rest ; because He once prayed with tears, now is He heard with acceptance ; because He once sat weary by the well, now from beneath His throne floweth the water of the river of life for ever ; because ‘He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, therefore God also hath highly exalted Him,’ that His head alone should be lifted up and crowned with all power and might, while all others in all countries of the world should be bowed before Him in reverence or crushed down before Him in judgment.

This Psalm, which was written by David, and which in many re-

spects resembles the second Psalm, was always acknowledged by the Jewish Church to be prophetic of the Messiah. The distinctive glory of Christ foretold in the first and fifth verses, that He should "sit on the right hand of God," is referred to again and again in the New Testament, and is embodied in the Apostles' Creed. This is altogether a Christian Psalm. Our Lord Himself, in the latter days of His ministry, referred to verse 1 of this Psalm; and by the question which He proposed to the Scribes as to how the Christ could be at once the Son and the Lord of David, He gave them that answer to their inquiries, "If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly," which they had often before requested,—plain to them that would understand, but dark and strange to those whose hearts were hardened. He Himself taught them the mystery of the union of the two natures, the Godhead and the Manhood, in the one Christ. (St. Matt. xxii. 41—45.) After this question no one dared to ask Him any more questions; yet, as Origen says, if their enquiries had been from a desire of learning, He would never have set before them such things that they would not venture to question Him again. St. Peter again refers this verse to our Lord in Acts ii. 32—36. We have also an inspired commentary upon verse 4 in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which the nature of the royal priesthood of Jesus Christ, which like that of Melchisedech was not reckoned after genealogies, existing before that of Aaron, and continuing after it, is set forth in connection with the second covenant, that is, the Gospel, of which He is the great High-priest. He is the Ruler of His people, and the Bishop over all those who, under Him, are ordained to be His ministers among His Church. Verse 3 presents many difficulties to the translator. This Psalm is appointed for Christmas-day.

FOR EASTER-DAY.

PSALM cxi. *Confitebor Tibi.*

1. I WILL give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart : secretly among the faithful, and in the congregation.

When the heart swells with gratitude to God, it must have utterance. The feeling of love seeks expression with and through the heart's best offerings.

It is the heart's earnest desire to empty itself of whatever is choicest, that it may come up as a sweet savour to its Lord. He who thus gives thanks unto the risen Lord, will do it both with his lips and in his life, rising with Him to newness of life, giving up himself to His service, walking before Him holily and righteously. His whole being will be a hallelujah. Whether it be in the quieter and less seen communion of the saints on earth with their Lord, or in the loud joyous anthem in the congregation of the faithful, he will ever be ready to join in saying, 'We praise Thee, O God.'

2. The works of the Lord are great : sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

3. His work is worthy to be praised, and had in honour : and His righteousness endureth for ever.

4. The merciful and gracious Lord hath so done His marvellous works : that they ought to be had in remembrance.

All things in nature speak the praise of God, 'for He spake the word, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created.' And so the Church in her ancient hymn says, 'O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise Him, and magnify Him for ever.' A contemplation of the wonderful works of God, both in our creation and in our redemption, is well fitted to draw out our reverence and gratitude; and it is an exercise in which godly

men are not apt soon to weary, for thereby they learn even to see and understand for themselves *why* the Lord's works are worthy to be praised and had in honour. It is because they are founded in righteousness, and so have in themselves the principles of everlasting endurance. God first made the world in beauty and goodness; He redeemed it in mercy and love; He still governs it in moral truth and righteousness. And this, God's righteous government, appealing to all men, did so especially to the Israelites, who were more immediately governed by God, and whose whole history is but a manifesting of the perfect connection between obedience and reward, sin and punishment. From these and from all His dealings, it was meant that men should after their measure learn to make their Maker their example, by ordering their works in righteousness; though as yet they could not do this so fully as in these latter days, when God the Son hath come on earth to be men's visible pattern in His life, as well as their Saviour by His death, and their Justifier by His resurrection.

5. He hath given meat unto them that fear Him : He shall ever be mindful of His covenant.

No part of all God's government and guidance of His chosen people was so marvellous in itself, and made so deep and lasting an impression upon them, as their deliverance from Egyptian slavery and their miraculous preservation in the desert. These always

rushed to their memories when His goodness and His mercies were to be spoken of. He had fed them with manna which they had not known. And from these past experiences the faithful soul takes comfort for the future : ‘ He shall ever be mindful of His covenant.’ And the manna given to Israel, and laid up in the golden pot within the holy of holies, is a sign to the Christian now ; it speaks to him of the bread of life, and it is an assurance that this bread, the gift of eternal love, shall never fail, but that God, remembering His covenant, shall feed His Church therewith for ever.

6. He hath shewed His people the power of His works : that He may give them the heritage of the heathen.

7. The works of His hands are verity and judgement : all His commandments are true.

8. They stand fast for ever and ever : and are done in truth and equity.

However things may appear to men in their blindness, God does govern the world justly and equitably. All He does is in verity and judgment ; on these foundations rest His commandments, and whoso hath respect unto them shall prosper. Verily it shall ever be well with the righteous, but with the ungodly it can not be so. The nations lying in moral darkness and death, not following what light they have, at length become ripe for punish-

ment, and are rooted out, and their heritage is given to others, as Canaan was to Israel. This is the work of God's hands, true and just.

9. He sent redemption unto His people : He hath commanded His covenant for ever ; holy and reverend is His Name.

The ancient redemption of Israel from bondage was but the forerunner of that greater redemption of all mankind from the thrall of sin and Satan. Then He sent not redemption only, but the Redeemer—not sanctification only, but the Sanctifier. The covenant assured to Abraham and his seed was the first hint of that universal covenant which is commanded for ever, by which the Name of our Father and our God is hallowed to eternity.

10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom : a good understanding have all they that do thereafter ; the praise of it endureth for ever.

‘Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.’ There is no knowledge equal to the fear of God ; he that hath this and doeth after this, is a man of understanding ; for he possesses that true wisdom which is above and before all things, which is worth more than all riches else, for it can never perish, and ‘the praise of it endureth for ever.’

This is in the Hebrew an alphabetical Psalm, with this peculiarity, that the letters of the alphabet begin, not each verse, but each member

or clause of each verse in succession. With verse 10, compare Prov. i. 7; Eccles. xii. 13. It was most probably written upon the return from the captivity, to encourage the people in thanksgiving and the spirit of faith, by recalling to them the covenant which was made with their fathers, and the signs of mercy which had accompanied it. It is appointed by the Church to be used on Easter-day.

PSALM cxii. *Beatus vir.*

1. BLESSED is the man that feareth the Lord : he hath great delight in His commandments.

2. His seed shall be mighty upon earth : the generation of the faithful shall be blessed.

3. Riches and plenteousness shall be in his house : and his righteousness endureth for ever.

Blessed is he who hath his Lord and Saviour ever before him, loving Him, and therefore keeping His commandments; 'and His commandments are not grievous.' The blessing of divine love shall not rest upon him alone, but shall descend unto many generations in them 'that love God and keep His commandments.' It shall be to him and to his seed more and better than the wealth of faithful Abraham, more and better than the prosperity of righteous Joseph. His heart is made a temple of the Holy Ghost and a house of God, and therein are stored riches and plenteousness, not of the things of time, but of the reward of that righteousness which is for ever.

4. Unto the godly there ariseth up light

in the darkness : he is merciful, loving, and righteous.

Where there is darkness to others there is light to him. The Light of the world is above him and before him ; yea, 'the Day-star ariseth in his heart,' even as the Lord arose at midnight on Easter-day. 'God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' And so the graces of his Lord shine forth in him,—the grace of compassion, the grace of charity, the grace of right-doing.

5. A good man is merciful, and lendeth : and will guide his words with discretion.

6. For he shall never be moved : and the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.

7. He will not be afraid of any evil tidings : for his heart standeth fast, and believeth in the Lord.

8. His heart is established, and will not shrink : until he see his desire upon his enemies.

He will be bountiful with his hands, but sparing with his tongue ; for 'if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.' Thus will he 'shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.' He shall never be moved ; for what shall separate him from the love of Christ,

of things seen or things unseen, of things present or things to come? His prayers are stored up in the memory of his Lord, his name is written in the Lamb's book of life; no threatening words of earth or hell can give him fear, whose faith is fixed on the eternal promises of Him Who cannot lie. His heart is established; 'the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity.' His faith will not fail, nor shrink, nor change, while one by one his enemies are brought to the knowledge of the truth and the love of Christ, and he shall see his heart's desire fulfilled upon them, even that they may be saved.

9. He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor : and his righteousness remaineth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

Dispersing abroad, he is yet ever buying; giving, he is still gaining. He purchaseth with this world that which is to come, and so doth he gain both. With how little may we purchase a treasure in heaven, if we bestow our store aright! Zaccheus, indeed, gave the half of his goods to the poor to win a heavenly inheritance; but the poor widow made it secure to herself with but two mites, which make a farthing. The treasure of the righteous is his righteousness, and that shall endure unto him for ever; for He Who made the ages is his Guardian. As he

has shared in his Saviour's might, so shall he share in his Saviour's glory.

10. The ungodly shall see it, and it shall grieve him : he shall gnash with his teeth, and consume away ; the desire of the ungodly shall perish.

Most especially at that day which shall end this earthly scene. Then shall his blessing be made perfect before the assembled universe, when his Lord shall call him nearer to Himself, saying, 'Come, thou blessed.' The ungodly shall see too late the grace he set at nought, and the glory he has forfeited. There will in that fearful time be no place for repentance for them who have despised their God here ; they will desire it, but it will be in vain. The Judge 'shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are ; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity. Then shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when they shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and they themselves thrust out.'

This Psalm is also an alphabetical Psalm, constructed in the same way as the preceding one. It presents many points of resemblance to Psalm i., and, like it, may be considered as a prophecy of Jesus Christ, the perfect and the pattern Man, while at the same time its primary application is to him who loves God and keeps His commandments. It has no title in the Hebrew or Greek, but the Vulgate has the title, "Of the return of Haggai and Zechariah."

FOR EASTER-DAY.

PSALM cxiii. *Laudate, pueri.*

1. PRAISE the Lord, ye servants : O praise the Name of the Lord.

LXX. Praise the Lord, ye children.

2. Blessed be the Name of the Lord : from this time forth for evermore.

3. The Lord's Name is praised : from the rising up of the sun unto the going down of the same.

They who are God's servants are also His children : His servants through obedience, His children through love. We praise Him by obedience, we praise Him by love ; our praises begin now, in the time of this mortal life, but they who praise Him truly have no end of their praise. Blessing and honour are His, and shall be given unto Him morning and evening, day by day continually, by them who believe on His Name, throughout all the world, from the rising of the sun in the east to the distant countries of the west. Our constant prayer is also a constant prophecy,—‘Hallowed be Thy Name.’

4. The Lord is high above all heathen : and His glory above the heavens.

5. Who is like unto the Lord our God, that hath His dwelling so high : and yet humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth ?

The knowledge of His truth, and of His saving love, of His death and of His resurrection from the dead, is ever being made known unto the nations of the world; they who receive it become His servants, and He becomes their Lord. He is made the head of the heathen: the peoples shall bow down before Him, and confess Him to be their King, even as do the Seraphim in the highest heaven. His glory is above the dwellers on earth, but it is above the dwellers in heaven too. The whole universe suffices not for His dwelling-place, and yet hath He His temple in each holy and contrite heart, and makes His heaven there. 'For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, Whose Name is Holy; I dwell in the high and lofty place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' He Who once humbled Himself to behold the things on earth, will watch over the humble, that He may raise them to that height of heaven which He forsook for them.

6. He taketh up the simple out of the dust : and lifteth the poor out of the mire ;

7. That He may set him with the princes : even with the princes of His people.

8. He maketh the barren woman to keep house : and to be a joyful mother of children.

Heb. He causeth the barren mistress of a house
To dwell as a joyful mother of children.

He doeth all marvellous things,—raising David

from leading his sheep in the desert to the throne of Israel,—bringing back Job from the dung-hill on which he lay in misery and loneliness, to his former high and prosperous estate—giving the blessing of children to the desolate and barren, to Sarah and to Rebecca, to Rachel and to Hannah. These things are wonderful, but He hath done greater things than these, in raising up our poor fallen nature from the dust of corruption and decay, and taking it unto Himself, and thereby placing it above angels and archangels, on the right hand of the eternal Majesty. Praise we the Name of the Lord, for that the Son of Man, the First-born of our brethren from the dead, is seated on the throne of God! Praise we the Name of the Lord, for that His Church, once barren, oppressed, forsaken, hath brought forth children to His glory, children of the seed of Abraham, many as the stars in heaven, in saints on high in the dwellings of light—many as the sand on the sea-shore, in holy and humble men of heart, gathered from the waves of trouble and the bitterness of sin. ‘For it is written, Rejoice thou barren, that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.’

This Psalm is appointed by the Church for Easter-Day. It was probably, like the two which precede it, and with which it seems to have a connection, written after the return from the captivity. With verse 5 compare Isa. lvii. 15. The last three verses are taken from the song of Hannah, (1 Sam. ii. 5—8). This Psalm begins that series which made up the hymn called by the Rabbis “the greater Hallel,” which was sung by the Jews at the celebration of the Passover, and

also at the other chief festivals. According to Dr. Lightfoot, Psalms cxiii. and cxiv. were sung at the commencement of the Paschal feast, and the Psalms from cxv. to cxviii. after the fourth cup of wine, with which the feast ended. These last, therefore, were especially "the hymn" which our Lord and His disciples sang, (St. Matt. xxvi. 30). The Rabbis, however, differ as to the number of the Psalms which formed "the greater Hallel."

Ebening Prayer.

FOR EASTER-DAY.

PSALM CXIV. *In exitu Israel.*

1. WHEN Israel came out of Egypt : and the house of Jacob from among the strange people,

2. Judah was his sanctuary : and Israel his dominion.

3. The sea saw that, and fled : Jordan was driven back.

4. The mountains skipped like rams : and the little hills like young sheep.

When Israel was at length delivered by the hand of Moses from their long bondage in Egypt, where their oppressors had been alike strangers to them in language and in justice, God Himself, Who led them forth, was their King. He chose them to Himself, that His holiness and His power should abide among them. He said unto them, 'Ye shall be to Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.' Therefore, when they left Egypt, the Red Sea was cleft in twain before them, and they passed through ; and

when they came to Canaan, the river Jordan was divided, that they might enter. Therefore at the giving the law at Sinai, Horeb, and the mountains around, both great and small, shook with a sudden and mighty earthquake, like rams leaping in a grassy plain, with the young sheep frisking round them.

5. What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest : and thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back ?

6. Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams : and ye little hills, like young sheep.

7. Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord : at the presence of the God of Jacob ;

8. Who turned the hard rock into a standing water : and the flint-stone into a springing well.

It was not before the holiness or the power of Israel that the sea retired ; it was not through the might of the house of Judah that the mountains shook and the hills were rent. It was before Him Who was with and among them, Whose Name is the Lord, the God of Jacob, that the elements trembled and obeyed—before Him Who brought forth springs of water from the stricken rock in the thirsty desert of Rephidim. Yea rather, it was before Him Who is ever with His Church, giving holiness and power unto the true Israelites according to Abraham's seed, that the waters of the world

retired, that the heights of earth's strength and pride were made to tremble, and to become even as sheep of His fold,—even before Him Whose side was pierced upon the cross, 'and forthwith came thereout blood and water.' It was at His presence Who is the Lord our God, that the earth quaked greatly, on the morning of the third day, and the stone was rolled back from the door of the sepulchre, and He came forth from the hard rock of the tomb, making the cold, dark grave in which He had lain to become a very well-spring of salvation and of grace unto the world.

This is apparently a very ancient Psalm, written probably before the age of David, in celebration of the power of God in delivering His people. It was used at the Passover. With verse 2 compare Ex. xix. 5, 6, and 1 St. Peter ii. 9. In the LXX., Vulgate, and Syrian versions this Psalm is joined to the 105th. It is appointed by the Church for Easter-day, probably with especial reference to the last verse.

PSALM cxv. *Non nobis, Domine.*

1. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give the praise : for Thy loving mercy, and for Thy truth's sake.

2. Wherefore shall the heathen say : Where is now their God ?

To Him, from Whom all praise comes, be all praise from all the earth ascribed, even to His 'incommunicable Name' Who is His only-begotten Son, 'the brightness of His glory, and the express Image of His Person.' Not to us who are nothing, but to Him Who is all in all—to Him be all glory given,

for the sake of His loving mercy in His incarnation, and His truth in our redemption,—His loving mercy shewn to the Gentiles, and His truth made manifest to Israel,—that all the peoples of the world may know, and confess, and adore One God present everywhere and saving all.

3. As for our God, He is in heaven : He hath done whatsoever pleased Him.

Our God is ‘our Father which is in heaven,’ Who doeth ever righteousness and goodness, for that He is ever pleased in what is right and good.

4. Their idols are silver and gold : even the work of men’s hands.

5. They have mouths, and speak not : eyes have they, and see not.

6. They have ears, and hear not : noses have they, and smell not.

7. They have hands, and handle not ; feet have they, and walk not : neither speak they through their throat.

8. They that make them are like unto them : and so are all such as put their trust in them.

They despise His mercy and His truth who give to other things the praise that is due to Him ; whether they set their hearts on the mere silver and gold, the unrighteous mammon which calls forth the covetousness of their unregenerate hearts, or whether, in ignorance and folly more than brutish, they bow down to

idols which are images of the outward form of man, without even any likeness of man's inner faculties, which bear the outward organs of the senses, and yet are mere stocks and stones. False religion brings with it, like all false things, a curse: the man who trusts in idols becomes like his god; the worshipper of a soulless thing becomes also soulless himself. 'They that make a graven image are all of them vanity.' But, thanks be to God! the Son of the carpenter hath broken, and is breaking, the idols which the carpenter hath made. 'The idols He shall utterly abolish.' Therefore must the little ones of the Saviour keep themselves from idols—not 'that the idol is anything. But the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and the Holy Ghost would not that we should have fellowship with devils.'

9. But thou, house of Israel, trust thou in the Lord: He is their succour and defence.

10. Ye house of Aaron, put your trust in the Lord: He is their helper and defender.

11. Ye that fear the Lord, put your trust in the Lord: He is their helper and defender.

Therefore must the Church of the true Israel, both the people and the priests, and all of them that fear the Lord, trust in Him, the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, with the threefold confidence of faith, and hope, and love.

12. The Lord hath been mindful of us, and

He shall bless us : even He shall bless the house of Israel, He shall bless the house of Aaron.

13. He shall bless them that fear the Lord : both small and great.

14. The Lord shall increase you more and more : you and your children.

15. Ye are the blessed of the Lord : Who made heaven and earth.

For if the Church of the faithful trusteth in her Lord, He will be mindful of her faith. He will bless the seed of the true Israel, He will bless the spiritual house of Aaron, the priesthood of the second covenant. He will lay His hands on the little children and will bless them; and His Spirit hath said, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.' Yea, He will bless all that fear Him, in whatever portion of the Church they may be, or in whatever place their lot may be cast, in the order of His loving providence. One may plant, another may water, but He will give the increase. He will give such the blessing of increasing and of multiplying, of becoming more and more in number and in grace, raising up many children unto Abraham, even from the stony hearts of them who know not God. He will give them the blessing of Melchizedech, and of that Priest-King Who is greater than Melchizedech, Who giveth to us, for His blessing, Himself, the Maker of heaven and earth.

16. All the whole heavens are the Lord's : the earth hath He given to the children of men.

17. The dead praise not Thee, O Lord : neither all they that go down into silence.

18. But we will praise the Lord : from this time forth for evermore. Praise the Lord.

For these His blessings must we pay Him back blessings on our part again. The heaven of heavens is where the eternal God unveils His glory, and there the Seraphim who dwell there bless Him evermore. The earth hath He given to us as our portion for a time, therefore while we live on earth let us bless Him for His mercy and His truth, with our lips and in our lives. The dead are departed from this earthly scene; their bodies sleep within the sepulchre, and they have no longer a portion in the things that are done under the sun; they can no longer praise God with a mouth of flesh. But the saints made perfect in His brightness, as well as the believers in His Church on earth, can thank their God. The dead in trespasses and sins have no spirit of life or love within their hearts, and no voice of praise upon their lips; but we who are alive in Christ, citizens of the highest heaven, though sojourning for a while on earth—we will praise our God for all that He hath done for us, from this time forth for evermore.

This Psalm, which is without a title, has sometimes been considered a part of the preceding one: it rather seems suited to the return from

the captivity. It is impossible to fix the date of its composition. The latter portion bears the mark of having been intended to be sung by choirs of priests, Levites, and Israelite worshippers at the temple, responding to one another alternately. In verse 1, the words "mercy and truth" should be compared with Rom. xv. 8, 9; and the opening portion of the Psalm, which is almost identical with the latter part of Psalm cxxxv., with Isa. xlv. 9—20; and also verse 15, with Gen. xiv. 19, 20.

Morning Prayer.

ONE OF THE PSALMS IN THE OFFICE FOR THE
CHURCHING OF WOMEN.

PSALM CXVI. *Dilexi, quoniam.*

1. I AM well pleased : that the Lord hath
heard the voice of my prayer ;

LXX. I have felt love, for that the Lord will hear the voice
of my petition.

2. That He hath inclined His ear unto me :
therefore will I call upon Him as long as I
live.

All the joy, and trust, and love of the human
soul spring from the knowledge of the love of its
God. Whether in Hezekiah healed from his deadly
sickness, or in the Church of Israel coming back—
'she and the children whom the Lord had given her'
—from her prison in Babylon, and once more keep-
ing festival before the Lord in Zion,—whether in
the Christian mother returning thanksgiving in the
house of God for 'preservation in the great danger
of child-birth,' or in the pardoned spirit absolved
through Jesu's blood from the doom of sin, and de-

livered from eternal death,—wherever there is felt any joy or any love, it is but in answer to the loving-kindness and the goodness of our Father in heaven, Who hath heard us, and will ever hear us when we cry to Him. We can only love Him, because He first loved us; therefore while we live can we call with confidence in all our trouble on Him Who is our life.

3. The snares of death compassed me round about : and the pains of hell gat hold upon me.

4. I shall find trouble and heaviness, and I will call upon the Name of the Lord : O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul.

Sin hath come upon us, and pain and death, the close companions of sin. ‘In the day that thou sinnest thou shalt die’ was the warning given to the first man, which he despised; he strayed from God, and so fell into the snares of death. ‘In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children’ was the penalty pronounced upon the first woman. And so death and pain are become the heritage which the sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve have gained from their first parents’ sin. Each one of them has his and her allotted share; each one of them may make a most true prophecy,—‘I shall find trouble and heaviness.’ Yet through that overshadowing cloud of trouble and heaviness the love of our Father is shining still; and each one may add to the prophecy of trouble the resolve which

bears them safe through it,—‘I will call upon the Name of the Lord.’ From amid the very snares of death, and under the oppression of pains of conscience, which are the foretaste of hell, the cry, ‘O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul,’ will reach the bowed-down ear of the Lord of love.

5. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous : yea, our God is merciful.

6. The Lord preserveth the simple : I was in misery, and He helped me.

7. Turn again then unto thy rest, O my soul : for the Lord hath rewarded thee.

8. And why ? ‘Thou hast delivered my soul from death : mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

9. I will walk before the Lord : in the land of the living.

Grace, righteousness, and mercy are the three glories of our Lord and God. He is merciful, for He blessed the little ones that were brought unto Him, and ever preserveth them who seek to do His will in simpleness of heart and child-like faith. We may be in misery through our own fault and sin, yet if we be not obstinate in sin, He will seek us, help us, save us. He is righteous, for He chastens us when we deserve chastisement, and rewards us ten thousandfold for our obedience and right-doing. He is gracious, for He hath not only delivered our soul from spiritual death, but hath by His Holy Spirit saved our

eyes from those blinding tears—the tears of too late repentance; and our feet from that most deadly fall—the fall into unforgiven sin. Should not then our souls—which yet we cannot truly call ours, seeing they are His—turn to Him Who hath turned to us, and find their rest in Him? Turn we to Him with the prayer of the soul,—for that is the very soul of prayer,—and entreat we Him with all our mind and strength to guide us, by that path which is Himself, unto that land of life where all live unto Him, where there is no more weeping, because there is no more falling, and where there is no more falling, because there is no more weakness.

10. I believed, and therefore will I speak; but I was sore troubled: I said in my haste, All men are liars.

When faith is joined to love, then are both made perfect; then can we make an acceptable confession before our Lord and Saviour. We believe, and therefore we speak, and He inclines His ear to us: ‘for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.’ Faith and love together will overcome all this world’s troubles, how sore soever they may be. We cannot trust to man; we may lean awhile upon an arm of flesh, but when trouble comes it will be of no help to us, and in our impatience and transport of grief we shall declare that all men are liars and deceivers, and shall feel sure that all men are utter nothingness and vanity. But ‘he that believeth

shall not make haste.' Therefore let us look not to man, but soberly and thoughtfully to God, and then, 'having the spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed and therefore have I spoken, we also shall believe and shall therefore speak; knowing that He Which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus.'

11. What reward shall I give unto the Lord : for all the benefits that He hath done unto me ?

12. I will receive the cup of salvation : and call upon the Name of the Lord.

What repayment then can we make to Him for all that, in His grace, and righteousness, and mercy, He hath done to us? What can we give to Him Who hath given Himself for us? What can we give to Him Who hath given Himself to us? What return—but the preparing ourselves to accept His benefits, and the asking more of them from Him? We thank Him best by receiving. He hath done unto us many benefits, and He crowns them all by giving to us the Cup of blessing, which we present as a thank-offering to Him, by receiving it as an overflowing of salvation to ourselves. In that receiving do we most truly praise His Name,—no longer liars by our own sins, but being found true in the imparting of His grace. He giveth us freely the Cup of salvation, which when we receive and call upon the Name of the Lord, then do we return a reward unto Him for all that He hath done unto ourselves.

13. I will pay my vows now in the presence of all His people : right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

14. Behold, O Lord, how that I am Thy servant : I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid ; Thou hast broken my bonds in sunder.

15. I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving : and will call upon the Name of the Lord.

16. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, in the sight of all His people : in the courts of the Lord's house, even in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord.

Then shall we know how the Cup of salvation which the Saviour gives us, more than overpays the trouble and heaviness which we had found for ourselves. Then sorrow is swallowed up in thankfulness and joy. The Lord hath said Himself, 'A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come : but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow : but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.' Therefore in thankfulness must we pay our vows and perform our service of prayer and thanksgiving to Him Who watches over the lives of His saints, for that their death is too costly

and precious in His sight, that He should suffer any enemy to snatch them from His saving care. Dear unto Him is the death of His saints, for it cost Him dear to make them His; for it was with His own death that He purchased the right to say, 'They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels.' We are indeed His; He hath every claim to our obedience and our service. We are the children of His handmaid the Church; we were the servants of sin, 'but now being made free from sin and become servants of God,' our old prison-house is broken down and the chains of our bondage are snapped asunder for ever. Being then healed from sickness, saved from death, set free from slavery, let us thank and praise Him Who is our Healer, our Saviour, our Redeemer, not by ourselves alone, but in the congregation of His people, in the courts of His house, in the communion of His saints, even in the midst of His holy Church. Let our Alleluias be heard where many can hear them, and where many can join in them and chant Alleluia too!

This Psalm in the LXX. and Vulgate is divided at verse 10, and forms two Psalms, which are numbered in those translations cxiv. and cxv. It was most probably written after the return from Babylon, as a thanksgiving to God for His mercies; though some commentators have thought that it might have been composed on the occasion of Hezekiah's sickness and miraculous recovery. St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine interpret it spiritually. Verse 10 is cited by St. Paul in 2 Cor. iv. 13. The "cup of salvation" in verse 13, has a reference to the offering of wine which was poured before God at the daily sacrifices (Num. xxviii. 3,) and the peace-offerings; but it also refers to the cup of wine which, at the Passover, the

master of the house took, and blessed God with the words, "Blessed be our God, the Lord of the world, Who hath created the fruit of the vine." This was the cup of which our Lord declared He would not taste until He "drank it with His disciples in the kingdom of God," (St. Luke xxii. 17, 18); and which was followed by that other cup after supper which He consecrated by His own blessing, "saying, This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you," (St. Luke xxii. 20). It is for this reason that St. Paul calls that Eucharistic cup which came after, and took the place of the Paschal cup, "the Cup of blessing," (1 Cor. x. 16). It must be borne in mind that this Psalm formed part of the greater Hallel, which was sung at the Passover. It is appointed by the Church as one of the Psalms to be used in the thanksgiving of women after child-birth; and every Christian mother who has experienced the preserving care of God through that suffering which is the chastisement of the first woman's sin, (Gen. iii. 16,) should meditate over it with especial regard to the mercy and the grace which she has especially received, and in connexion with the divine promise in 1 Tim. ii. 14, 15.

PSALM cxvii. *Laudate Dominum.*

1. O PRAISE the Lord, all ye heathen : praise Him, all ye nations.

2. For His merciful kindness is ever more and more towards us : and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise the Lord.

The love of God to man shines forth more and more gloriously as the ages of the world roll on. His merciful kindness is not limited to one race, but extends to all the nations of the earth, and to all the families of mankind, even to them who as yet know Him not. And His truth and faithfulness in keeping the promise which He sware to Abraham is confirmed, in that He hath made it good to all the sons of men. For this must the world praise Him; for

this must all the nations give Him thanks, as one by one they are brought into the covenant of grace. For this is a most true saying, 'that Jesus Christ was a Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to Thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto Thy Name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud Him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust.'

This very brief Psalm is quoted by St. Paul, (Rom. xv. 11,) to prove the universality of the salvation which was given to man in Christ. It has no title.

FOR EASTER-DAY.

PSALM cxviii. *Confitemini Domino.*

1. O GIVE thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious : because His mercy endureth for ever.

2. Let Israel now confess, that He is gracious : and that His mercy endureth for ever.

3. Let the house of Aaron now confess : that His mercy endureth for ever.

4. Yea, let them now that fear the Lord confess : that His mercy endureth for ever.

This was the thankful and exulting chant in which, at the building up again of the second temple, all the returned from the captivity, priests and Levites, Israelites and proselytes, joined with heart and voice, giving thanks unto the Lord, for that He is gracious, because His mercy endureth for ever. 'And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord, Because He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundations of the House of the Lord were laid.' If this were the joy of the Church of Israel on the day of the raising up of the second temple, with how much greater thankfulness will the Church of Christ rejoice at His rising again Whose body is the true temple of the fulness of the Godhead. If the first was a sign of His ever-enduring mercy, yet was the second a far mightier one. He once said, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But He spake of the temple of His body.' And the Jews did destroy it, as far as in them lay, and He again on the third day raised it from the grave by the power of God, even as Zerubbabel the prince and Jeshua the high-priest raised the second temple from the ruins of Jerusalem.

5. I called upon the Lord in trouble : and the Lord heard me at large.

Heb. In straitness I called upon the Lord,
And the Lord answered me in a wide place.

6. The Lord is on my side : I will not fear what man doeth unto me.

7. The Lord taketh my part with them that help me : therefore shall I see my desire upon mine enemies.

As Israel in their bondage called upon the Lord and found deliverance, so Christ prayed upon the cross and was heard. His soul was not left in hell, His body was raised from the narrowness of the tomb; and in Him His people were delivered too. The Almighty Father was with Him, and is with them, therefore they can be fearless in and with their Lord. All things both in nature and in grace fight on the side of Christ against sin and evil; therefore at last shall He see His desire of love and mercy wrought out, even with those that resist His loving call.

8. It is better to trust in the Lord : than to put any confidence in man.

9. It is better to trust in the Lord : than to put any confidence in princes.

10. All nations compassed me round about : but in the Name of the Lord will I destroy them.

11. They kept me in on every side, they

kept me in, I say, on every side : but in the Name of the Lord will I destroy them.

12. They came about me like bees, and are extinct even as the fire among the thorns : for in the Name of the Lord will I destroy them.

‘There is none good but One, that is, God ;’ therefore is it better to trust in God than to put confidence in man. There is none mighty but One, that is, God ; therefore it is better to trust in Him than to put confidence in princes, or in earthly great ones. ‘Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils ; for wherein is he to be accounted of?’ Christ the Conqueror trusted in the Father, and overcame ; and thus by the like faith doth He in His Church overcome the nations of the world. Like Israel kept in on every side by their enemies in Babylon, so He was sore straitened in His labour of redemption ; but at length He ended it, and conquered. His enemies, like a swarm of bees, came round Him with the honey of flattering words, yet hiding the sting of enmity and malice ; but in a little space they were destroyed and gone, like fire which blazes fiercely for awhile in the parched-up thicket, and then as quickly sinks and dies away, leaving but smouldering firebrands. For so did they who scorned the mercy of Him Who called them, at length feel the truth of Him Who judgeth them..

13. Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall : but the Lord was my help.

14. The Lord is my strength, and my song : and is become my salvation.

15. The voice of joy and health is in the dwellings of the righteous : the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass.

16. The right hand of the Lord hath the pre-eminence : the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass.

The powers of the world strove hard to cast down our Lord, therefore will they not cease to thrust sore at us, that we may fall. But He Who baffled them is our help. We can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us ; in Him can we ever rejoice Who is become our salvation. As the captives of Judah rejoiced in keeping the feast of tabernacles again in Jerusalem, the city of their fathers, so do the redeemed of Christ raise their voices to Him with joy in His holy Church. 'The right hand of God, and He Who sitteth at the right hand, hath raised the meek, made perfect the feeble, glorified the humble, saved the repenting, to shew forth His wonders in the threefold pre-eminence of might, of holiness, and of love.

17. I shall not die, but live : and declare the works of the Lord.

18. The Lord hath chastened and corrected me : but He hath not given me over unto death.

The enemies of truth thought that He had died,

but His death was the ensuring of eternal life to His own. He saith, 'I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen.' He for us bore the chastisement of our sins, that we when we are chastised might have confidence that we should not be given over unto death; because 'we were chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.'

19. Open me the gates of righteousness : that I may go into them, and give thanks unto the Lord.

20. This is the gate of the Lord : the righteous shall enter into it.

He was not given over unto death, but death was given over unto Him, that He might trample him down and take away his sting. 'He hath the keys of hell and of death,' yea, and of heaven too. He therefore rose from the dead and opened the gates of heaven to all believers; opening the gates and being Himself the gate by which His people enter into the eternal kingdom.

21. I will thank Thee, for Thou hast heard me : and art become my salvation.

22. The same stone which the builders refused : is become the head-stone in the corner.

23. This is the Lord's doing : and it is marvellous in our eyes.

He was heard when He prayed. By the grave of

Lazarus 'Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always, but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.' Like that stone at the building of the second temple, of which the tradition goes that it was again and again rejected by the builders, until at length it was placed as the corner-stone of the whole building, so the Son of Man, though He was rejected by men, was accepted and exalted by God. 'Jesus saith unto the Pharisees, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.' He was indeed 'the stone which was set at nought of the builders of Israel, which is become the head of the corner;' in which the building up both of Jews and Gentiles meet together and are joined in one. For Christ is He 'Who hath made both one.' Whosoever stumbleth at His humility, and confesses Him not aright in His manhood, shall be broken in his faith, but if he turn and repent he shall not perish utterly; but on whomsoever He shall fall, when He comes at last in judgment and in the glory of the eternal God, He will crush him into utter destruction. Thus marvellously hath the Father honoured Him in the sight of men and angels, Who, though once rejected, is become the Corner-stone of the whole Church,

binding together the fabric of the heavenly temple for time and for eternity.

24. This is the day which the Lord hath made : we will rejoice and be glad in it.

25. Help me now, O Lord : O Lord, send us now prosperity.

26. Blessed be he that cometh in the Name of the Lord : we have wished you good luck, ye that are of the house of the Lord.

Glad and glorious was the day on which, by the providence of God, the second temple arose from its ruins after the desolation of Sion ; but still brighter and more full of joy was that day on which the Man Christ Jesus, Whose body was the true temple of the true Israel, arose after three days from the prison of the grave ! Then did the day of grace dawn forth with everlasting radiance ; then began the reign of the Son of Man, amid the hosannahs of the Church ; then was the Sabbath changed into ' the Lord's Day,' and the Paschal feast became the Easter festival. He still rideth on in triumph through the world, saluted as the Son of David, blessed as ' the King that cometh in the name of the Lord ;' owned by all—except His own peculiar people, the race of Israel. And unto them the day of His rising brings no joy, for that their eyes are blinded by their want of love and faith. He prophesied unto them too truly, ' Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall

say, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.'

27. God is the Lord Who hath shewed us light : bind the sacrifice with cords, yea, even unto the horns of the altar.

LXX. Appoint the feast in thick boughs,
Even to the horns of the altar.

Thus hath God given us light in our darkness—thus hath the day-spring arisen upon us. Therefore do we sing ever on Easter-day, 'Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast.' Therefore do we ever on Easter-day behold 'before our eyes Christ Jesus evidently set forth crucified among us,' in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood; therefore doth 'the love of Christ constrain us' then to bring our own sacrifice, our hearts and consciences, and bind them unto the horns of His altar by the cords of holy longings and obedient love.

28. Thou art my God, and I will thank Thee : Thou art my God, and I will praise Thee.

29. O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious : and His mercy endureth for ever.

Unto Him risen and alive again, we cry with the apostle who for a space was doubtful, 'My Lord and my God.' We ascribe unto Him all gratitude and love, all praise and honour, Who died and rose again to win grace for man in the fulness of His everlasting mercy. With Christ's grace and mercy our song

of Easter joy began, and we shall still sing of His grace and mercy where our songs shall never end.

This Psalm is the last of those which, beginning from the 113th, compose the greater Hallel. It would seem highly probable that it was composed to be sung at the laying the foundation-stone of the second temple, (see Ezra iii. 10, 11). The whole tenor of the Psalm confirms this view. In it Israel returns thanks to God for deliverance out of trials and great straits. Verses 19, 20, refer, it is likely, to a temporary tabernacle erected immediately after the return, for the performance of worship, (Ezra iii. 1). Verse 22 has a direct reference to the laying the corner-stone of the temple, and this verse is cited both by our Lord Himself (St. Matt. xxi. 42), and by St. Peter (Acts iv. 11), and by St. Paul (Eph. ii. 20), as containing a type of Him on Whom the Church was built. Rabbi Jarchi understands this verse of the Messiah; and Hammond refers to it a tradition, that a certain stone being often rejected by the builders of the temple as useless, at length was found marvellously adapted for the corner, the place of honour. Verse 26 contains one of the titles of Christ,—“He who should come.” (Compare Mal. iii. 1; St. Matt. xi. 3, xxiii. 39.) The feast-day spoken of in verse 24 may be the feast of tabernacles, on which, as on other joyful occasions, it was usual to sing Hosanna; and at the last entering of Christ into Jerusalem the people sang verses of this very hymn, (St. Matth. xxi. 9; St. Luke xix. 38). For this reason, and because it was used by the Jews at the Passover, as well as because the whole Psalm is full of typical references to Christ, it is appointed by the Church for Easter-day.

Ebening Prayer.

PSALM cxix. *Beati immaculati.*

1. BLESSED are those that are undefiled in the way : and walk in the law of the Lord.

The aim of all aims, the good of all goods, the crown of all crowns, is the blessing of our Father, and Lord, and God. With this we begin, with

this we end: our life without His blessing is but death. We travel onward, and whither are we going? Are we not seeking for a blessing? If we would indeed be blessed, we must be undefiled in the way we go. Unless we keep our faith whole and undefiled, without doubt we perish everlastingly. We must walk onward in that narrow way which is hedged in by the law of God. They who would reach to blessedness must journey by that road of obedience and holiness.

2. Blessed are they that keep His testimonies : and seek Him with their whole heart.

3. For they who do no wickedness : walk in His ways.

Blessed indeed are they who have received, but more blessed are they who preserve, and keep stored up within their mind, the testimonies of His revealed promises; and dwelling on them, press continually forward to seek the God Who gave them, with all their heart and strength. Such are twice blessed; they are blessed in seeking Him, and they are blessed again in finding Him Whom they seek. They are His, for they do no sin, and 'the Wicked one toucheth them not;' they are His, for they continue walking undefiled in His ways.

4. Thou hast charged : that we shall diligently keep Thy commandments.

5. O that my ways were made so direct : that I might keep Thy statutes !

6. So shall I not be confounded : while I have respect unto all Thy commandments.

7. I will thank Thee with an unfeigned heart : when I shall have learned the judgments of Thy righteousness.

His ways are plain, they cannot easily be missed. He has marked them out by His commandments, and the solemn charge which He gave at Sinai that they should be kept. Would that our ways could be so conformed to His in rectitude and truth, that we might never lose sight of His statutes, His unchangeable decrees of right and wrong which are engraved upon the very soul and conscience ! If it were but so with us, no falsehood could ever deceive us, no shame ever come upon us, while we were ruled in all things by the plainly enjoined commandments of God. Then could we thank Him in sincerity and real joy for all that happens to us in our worldly lot, while day by day we more clearly saw and understood how all that He did in His providence was right and fit, how all His judgments with men were very righteousness.

8. I will keep Thy ceremonies : O forsake me not utterly.

The memories of the grandeur of God's law, of the beauty of His testimonies, the truth of His commandments, the holiness of His statutes, cannot but rouse the thoughtful heart to call to Him for grace to keep and to do them. I will keep them, only do

Thou keep me and forsake me not : this is the cry of the child of God to his Father in heaven, and it is a cry which is never raised in vain.

This Psalm is made up of twenty-two portions or stanzas, of eight lines each. The first of these has in the Hebrew every line commencing with the letter *Aleph*, or A. The Law of God is the subject of the whole, and is named in every verse. After each one of these portions the Church directs that the Doxology be sung in her services, as after an entire Psalm.

In quo corriget ?

9. WHEREWITHAL shall a young man cleanse his way : even by ruling himself after Thy word.

But if the blessing cometh upon the undefiled in the way, how is man, especially in the season of youth, amid all the trials of awakening passions and the opening temptations of the world, to make his way clean and unpolluted before the All-seeing? He can only do so through grace strengthening him; then he may rule over his unruly will and affections, and compel them to submit to the restraints of God's holy word. He must act as a good soldier in his Lord's army, as being under authority and yet in authority, ruling well his hopes, and thoughts, and fears, and wishes; saying to one, 'Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh.'

10. With my whole heart have I sought Thee : O let me not go wrong out of Thy commandments.

11. Thy words have I hid within my heart : that I should not sin against Thee.

So may he aspire to the blessing of them who seek their God, not with a double heart, 'a heart and a heart,' but with a whole and single love, a sincere and perfect longing that he may never go wrong, or transgress the commandments which have been given him. To this end he will keep the sayings of his Lord stored up within his soul, as a safeguard and antidote against the very approach of the corruption of sin ; and so shall he be 'clean through the words which Christ hath spoken unto him.'

12. Blessed art Thou, O Lord : O teach me Thy statutes.

13. With my lips have I been telling : of all the judgements of Thy mouth.

14. I have had as great delight in the way of Thy testimonies : as in all manner of riches.

15. I will talk of Thy commandments : and have respect unto Thy ways.

16. My delight shall be in Thy statutes : and I will not forget Thy word.

And thus can he bless the Lord Who hath blessed him in teaching him the power and value of His ordinances. In the fulness of holy gratitude, he can relate the distinctly pronounced judgments of Providence towards himself. He will find joy in thus walking in the way of the divine testimonies greater than in any pleasure of possessions or in any pride

of riches. For who or what is the way of the testimonies of God but Christ? And 'He Who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?' Talking and meditating upon the law, the devout spirit will find increasing delight, and increasing profit, and increasing wisdom.

Each line in this portion commences with the letter *Beth*, or B.

Retribue servo Tuo.

17. O do well unto Thy servant : that I may live, and keep Thy word.

18. Open Thou mine eyes : that I may see the wondrous things of Thy law.

19. I am a stranger upon earth : O hide not Thy commandments from me.

20. My soul breaketh out for the very fervent desire : that it hath alway unto Thy judgements.

From God cometh all good : He giveth life, He giveth grace, He giveth wisdom. The law of God cannot be kept with obedience until it be seen with understanding ; therefore must we crave with the blind men by the wayside, 'Lord, that our eyes may be opened.' When we have grace to see clearly, the marvels and wonders of the revelation of God become glorious and entrancing indeed. What is more marvellous than that command of Christ, 'I say unto you, Love your enemies?' And who can see

its wonder and its beauty but they, the eyes of whose spirit the Holy Ghost has opened? Strangers we are, and pilgrims, but what is our weariness or solitude, if our path be cheered with the opening before us of the laws and statutes of that better country for which our souls are seeking. The knowledge of them will fill the spirit with an almost passionate yearning for that all-perfect and all-lovely goodness which reigneth there.

21. Thou hast rebuked the proud : and cursed are they that do err from 'Thy commandments.

22. O turn from me shame and rebuke : for I have kept Thy testimonies.

23. Princes also did sit and speak against me : but Thy servant is occupied in Thy statutes.

24. For Thy testimonies are my delight : and my counsellors.

It is not with the wicked as with the good, or with the proud as with the humble. As there is delight for the meek, so is there rebuke for the proud. As they are blessed who walk in the law of the Lord, so are they cursed who do err from His commandments. Come, ye blessed; Depart, ye cursed,—these are the two mighty laws whose workings make up the history of the world. He who loves God will love His blessing above all things, and will dread His rebuke above all things.

He will keep His testimonies in spite of all fleshly opposition and human power, even as Daniel prayed and was occupied in God's statutes, though the princes of Persia were conspiring together to make a decree of their own to destroy him. The promises of God are ever the righteous man's most pleasant friends, and his wisest counsellors.

The lines in this portion commence with the letter *Gimel*, or G. With verse 23, compare Dan. vi.

Adhæsit pavimento.

25. My soul cleaveth to the dust : O quicken Thou me, according to Thy word.

But the meditation on the perfectness and purity of God's holy law brings out our unworthiness, and sin, and misery. The sight of its brightness makes us bow down our dazzled faces to the earth in humiliation and self-contempt. We cleave by nature to the dust from which we were formed, and which was quickened by the breath of life from God ; and we have scarcely raised ourselves from it, when the sight of His righteousness and majesty bows us down to it again. There then let us kneel, and pray that the Lord and Giver of life would give us life and strength to do His will—would quicken us, as He quickened Adam, not according to our deservings, but by His own living word.

26. I have acknowledged my ways, and Thou heardest me : O teach me Thy statutes.

27. Make me to understand the way of

Thy commandments : and so shall I talk of Thy wondrous works.

We cry, and He hears; we have but to confess, and He pardons; we acknowledge our evil ways, and He blots them out. His grace teaches us, His statutes open to us the way of right, and He gives us wisdom to meditate on His wondrous love.

28. My soul melteth away for very heaviness : comfort Thou me according unto Thy word.

And if we fall, He raiseth us again. Our sorrow and repentance, which would make our very soul melt into tears, by His grace Whose name is the Comforter, bring with themselves comfort and help.

29. Take from me the way of lying : and cause Thou me to make much of Thy law.

30. I have chosen the way of truth : and Thy judgements have I laid before me.

31. I have stuck unto Thy testimonies : O Lord, confound me not.

32. I will run the way of Thy commandments : when Thou hast set my heart at liberty.

Lying and falsehood is the first hindrance to our obedience. Therefore we implore the God of truth to take it away, that we may know and love His will. Then, when the way of lying is taken away, can we know and choose the way of truth. In that

way do the dealings of God with man lie clear and plain before us, like a spacious prospect before a traveller. The hedges of His testimonies mark out on both sides the path of Life, and he who runneth between them may trust that he will fall into no error or confusion. But we only can so run in the way of His commandments when, by His adoption and grace, He has forgiven us our sins and set us free from the bond of fleshly corruption. So 'it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.'

The letter *Daleth*, or D, is here the initial letter.

Morning Prayer.

Legem pone.

33. TEACH me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes : and I shall keep it unto the end.

34. Give me understanding, and I shall keep Thy law : yea, I shall keep it with my whole heart.

35. Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments : for therein is my desire.

36. Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies : and not to covetousness.

37. O turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity : and quicken Thou me in Thy way.

As he who is parched with thirst, even if a full cup of water be given to him, yet when he has drunk it asks for more; so he who has had grace to begin the course of obedience, yet is ever praying diligently for more grace, that he may persevere in it, that he may keep in it to the end, that he may keep it with his whole heart and strength. He desires to go in the path of righteousness, and he therefore asks to be compelled to go in it; he petitions that no other longing, no other desire for the perishing things of earth, may bear comparison with the longing for the true riches. He begs that his eyes may be closed to the vain gauds and allurements of the world, that he may not even look upon what is evil, and that the life of grace within him may be renewed, where it hath ever been decayed by his own carnal will or frailness.

38. O stablish Thy word in Thy servant : that I may fear Thee.

39. Take away the rebuke that I am afraid of : for Thy judgements are good.

40. Behold, my delight is in Thy commandments : O quicken me in Thy righteousness.

Thus will the word of God be made strong and firm within him, filling him both with faith and fear; thus shall he escape the rebuke which, of all things that are, is the one thing truly terrible—the rebuke of the all-righteous God. And fearing only God's rebuke, he will love only God's revealed will;

and the life within him will be a life not only of obedience, but of willing righteousness.

These verses all commence with the letter *He*, or *H*.

Et veniat super me.

41. LET Thy loving mercy come also unto me, O Lord : even Thy salvation, according unto Thy word.

42. So shall I make answer unto my blasphemers : for my trust is in 'Thy word.

But in asking for mercy, what is it that the servant of God desires? It is not help or relief in temporal things; it is the everlasting salvation which God has promised through Christ the Incarnate Word. It is the being saved from sin, from himself, from doubt, from death, through Divine patience. 'The long-suffering of our God is salvation,' and through this can we make answer to our revilers and tempters, whether in the flesh or the spirit,—God has borne with me, has had patience with me, has pardoned me, has helped me; how, then, is earth or hell to hinder me?

43. O take not the word of Thy truth utterly out of my mouth : for my hope is in Thy judgements.

44. So shall I alway keep Thy law : yea, for ever and ever.

45. And I will walk at liberty : for I seek Thy commandments.

46. I will speak of Thy testimonies also, even before kings : and will not be ashamed.

47. And my delight shall be in Thy commandments : which I have loved.

48. My hands also will I lift up unto Thy commandments, which I have loved : and my study shall be in Thy statutes.

To him that has this salvation, the abiding in God's law is a thing of course. It is, as it were, impossible for him to break it. He is at liberty, because he is the servant of Him Whose service is perfect freedom : he can speak of the truth and promises of God before kings, though they may be tyrants and persecutors, and will come forth a victorious martyr through Him Who loveth him. Loving his Lord, he cannot but keep His commandments ; for he that loveth hath fulfilled the law. His hands will go with his heart, ever upward and Godward ; he will 'lift them up unto the Lord, the most high God,' in holy resolutions, in fervent prayers, in grateful blessings, and in active undertakings and duties. His best wisdom and chiefest learning will be the knowledge of the statutes of God.

The Hebrew letter here is *Vau*, or V.

Memor esto servi Tui.

49. O THINK upon Thy servant, as concerning Thy word : wherein Thou hast caused me to put my trust.

50. The same is my comfort in my trouble :
for Thy word hath quickened me.

The servant of God may appeal unto his Lord to think upon him and to remember, while he knows that God never forgetteth or faileth them who trust Him. He may plead God's promises before Him, for by doing so he stirs up his own faith and draws patience and comfort from the very act of pleading. In the Gospel and its promises will be his life ; for each word uttered by the eternal Word cannot but be full of eternal Life. He will follow the pattern of his Saviour, Who comforted Himself with God's word in the wilderness, in the temple, on the cross.

51. The proud have had me exceedingly in derision : yet have I not shrunk from Thy law.

LXX. The proud dealt exceeding wickedly.

52. For I remembered Thine everlasting judgements, O Lord : and received comfort.

The wicked despise and persecute the righteous, and are reckless in their own wickedness ; yet will not the faithful soul shrink back from the task of obedience which has been given unto it to do. The wicked will do wickedly for a season ; but above them, and above all, are the eternal judgments of the Divine righteousness ; and in the remembrance of these there is comfort to the soul that is tempted, persecuted, and despised.

53. I am horribly afraid : for the ungodly that forsake Thy law.

Yes, there is unspeakable comfort as far as his own right doing is concerned, but unspeakable terror on account of the wicked, who mock at obedience and forsake the eternal law, who have stripped themselves of all hope, and so of all fear of God. For them will the servant of God fear and be dismayed ; for them will he strive in earnest, trembling prayer ; for with him the measure of God's grace and mercy to himself will be the measure of his charity and care for others.

54. Thy statutes have been my songs : in the house of my pilgrimage.

55. I have thought upon Thy Name, O Lord, in the night-season : and have kept Thy law.

56. This I had : because I kept Thy commandments.

He who departed from paradise and the Jerusalem above, and going down to Jericho fell among robbers, but being saved by the mercy of the good Samaritan, hath been brought to the house of his pilgrimage, will make the statutes of Him Who saved him his song while he abideth there. The holy law so dreadful to the wicked is a comfort to the obedient, and becomes in his mouth a consoling song, which he cons over to himself through the long night-season of mortality, while he waits 'until the Lord come and bring to

light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts,' and then shall every man have his praise or reproof from God.

The verses of this, the seventh portion, commence with *Zain*, or *Z*.

Portio mea, Domine.

57. THOU art my portion, O Lord : I have promised to keep Thy law.

58. I made my humble petition in Thy presence with my whole heart : O be merciful unto me, according to Thy word.

The Lord is the portion of His saints. His promise to them that serve Him is, 'I am thy exceeding great reward.' Surely His people may well promise, for their parts, to keep His law. Thinking on this exceeding great reward, shall we not come into His presence and cry to Him for mercy, according to His Gospel, with all the longing of our heart and spirit?

59. I called mine own ways to remembrance : and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.

LXX. I reckoned up Thy ways.

60. I made haste, and prolonged not the time : to keep Thy commandments.

Thinking over and reckoning up our ways, with this reward in sight, and comparing them with His, shall we not ask Him fervently to set our accounts right before Him, to pardon our misspendings and

our misreckonings? And shall we not turn our feet with all haste, and make no delay to observe His will, for that the time is short?

61. The congregations of the ungodly have robbed me : but I have not forgotten Thy law.

62. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee : because of Thy righteous judgments.

63. I am a companion of all them that fear Thee : and keep Thy commandments.

64. The earth, O Lord, is full of Thy mercy : O teach me Thy statutes.

The wicked may deprive us of earthly goods, but they cannot touch our real treasure—the mercy and freely-given grace of our God. And for this must we give thanks unto Him, not only in the light of prosperity, but in the dark midnight of adversity and sorrow; rising early, and thanking Him continually for His righteous dealings with us, in these latter days of evil, when Satan hath possessed the world with a spirit of dumbness and prayerlessness. Thus in the communion of saints shall we be made companions and sharers with all the holy and the obedient of God's redeemed; and not only with them, but with Him Who redeemed them and became their companion, the Immortal with the mortal; Who watered the earth with His blood, that it might be full of His mercy and rich in the fruit of good

works, and gave grace to His people, that they might cry to Him, 'O teach me Thy statutes.'

The initial of these verses is *Cheth*, or *Kh*.

Bonitatem fecisti.

65. O LORD, Thou hast dealt graciously with Thy servant : according unto Thy word.

66. O learn me true understanding and knowledge : for I have believed Thy commandments.

67. Before I was troubled, I went wrong : but now have I kept Thy word.

68. Thou art good and gracious : O teach me Thy statutes.

All His dealings are grace and goodness to His servants. As He has said, so will He do. By His dealings He teaches, warns us, chastens us, corrects us, and manifests His fatherly tenderness towards us. Before we are chastened we too often go wrong in pride, in ignorance, in wilfulness. He sends us trouble, He makes us grieve; and yet from that very grief He causes to joy. Godly sorrow worketh repentance, and repentance beginneth obedience, so good and gracious is He! Shall we not therefore yet again pray to learn His statutes?

69. The proud have imagined a lie against me : but I will keep Thy commandments with my whole heart.

70. Their heart is as fat as brawn : but my delight hath been in Thy law.

LXX. Their heart has been curdled like milk.

71. It is good for me that I have been in trouble : that I may learn Thy statutes.

72. The law of Thy mouth is dearer unto me : than thousands of gold and silver.

The wicked do not see this, therefore they go on in falsehood and wickedness. Their heart becomes proud, and dull, and fleshly : they cannot discern the hand of God even when it is laid upon them. Far different is it with the righteous : his perception is quickened by his experience. He sees how trouble has kept off sin, and has turned him into the narrow way ; and therefore he readily and thankfully confesses that it is good for him to have been in trouble, that he may lay to heart the statutes of his Lord. He sees how the world promiseth pleasures, and they turn out very torments ; and how Christ promiseth tribulations, and they prove very joys. He sees that men desire gold and silver, and that it leads them to forget the law of God's mouth ; and he knows that there is good reason why he whose portion is the Lord Himself, should despise thousands of gold and silver in comparison of the riches of His grace and goodness. What are the gifts in comparison of the Giver ?

These lines all begin with *Teth*, or *Th*.

Evening Prayer.*Manus Tuæ fecerunt me.*

73. THY hands have made me and fashioned me : O give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments.

In the beginning God made man from the dust of the earth. We are the clay and He is the potter ; and when His hands had made us in the image of Himself, our own hands unmade us. Pray we Him once more to remake us in His image, and to fashion us anew after His likeness, by giving us not only the breath of life, but the quickening spirit of wisdom, and holiness, and obedience.

74. They that fear Thee will be glad when they see me : because I have put my trust in Thy word.

They who are filled with the divine light of this godly wisdom and this living faith, are a help and a joy to others their fellow-servants in the law of righteousness. They save not only themselves, but those who hear them and behold their works, and glorify God therefore.

75. I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right : and that Thou of very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled.

76. O let Thy merciful kindness be my

comfort : according to Thy word unto Thy servant.

77. O let Thy loving mercies come unto me, that I may live : for Thy law is my delight.

In the fulness of that wisdom faith grows not only grateful, but also bold. The believer can discern plainly, and feel confident, that his troubles not only may be overruled to be a means of good to him, but do actually proceed from the very faithfulness of his all-just God. When the Just One smites, it is in very love. The Redeemer saith, Sit ye here in Gethsemane, even to them whom He will hereafter bid to sit on His right hand and on His left in His kingdom. In this confidence, the love of his Saviour, as displayed in His Gospel, becomes a deeper and more perfect comfort, and His mercies, which flow from His love, bring with them the fulness of spiritual joy, which is the pledge and earnest of eternal life.

78. Let the proud be confounded, for they go wickedly about to destroy me : but I will be occupied in Thy commandments.

79. Let such as fear Thee, and have known Thy testimonies : be turned unto me.

80. O let my heart be sound in Thy statutes : that I be not ashamed.

Before the trust and love of such an one the schemes of the wicked who may strive to overthrow his hope, and to ruin his faith, are confounded and

brought to nothing ; while the affections and goodwill of the God-fearing and righteous are drawn towards him in the mystery of the communion of saints. His heart, by nature weak and foul, becomes strong and healthy in the doing of his Lord's will, through the laver of regeneration, whereby his past sins are blotted out ; through the help of the Holy Ghost, by which he overcomes the flesh ; through the power of the Lord's Prayer, in which he says, 'Forgive us our trespasses.' So when the heart is made sound and undefiled, with no sin spared and still remaining in it, the servant of God cannot be made ashamed either before earth or heaven.

Jed, or *I*, is the commencing letter of this, the tenth portion.

Defecit anima mea.

81. My soul hath longed for Thy salvation : and I have a good hope because of Thy word.

82. Mine eyes long sore for Thy word : saying, O when wilt Thou comfort me ?

83. For I am become like a bottle in the smoke : yet do I not forget Thy statutes.

LXX. I am become like a bottle in the frost.

Thus believing, hoping, loving, the regenerate soul looks beyond the conflicts and struggles of this present time, with patient longing to the Saviour's throne, not yet having salvation, but possessed of a good hope of winning it through the Word made Flesh. The eyes of devotion are looking ever upward

to Him Who leaves not His chosen comfortless, but sends to them that Spirit Whose name is Comforter. Yea, though the outward man perisheth, and the comeliness of the flesh is marred by sorrow and by pain, like a leathern bottle placed in the heat of a burning fire and discoloured by its smoke, yet the inward man is renewed day by day in meditation on God's ways and will.

84. How many are the days of Thy servant : when wilt Thou be avenged of them that persecute me ?

85. The proud have digged pits for me : which are not after Thy law.

86. All Thy commandments are true : they persecute me falsely ; O be Thou my help.

87. They had almost made an end of me upon earth : but I forsook not Thy commandments.

88. O quicken me after Thy loving-kindness : and so shall I keep the testimonies of Thy mouth.

Though the time of trial may be long, though the believer may have, in his conflict with the wicked, to cry with the souls beneath the altar, ' How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ? ' Though they in whose hearts pride hath cast out God may lay snares for his soul, may persecute him for a false pretence, may seem ready almost to make an end of

him, and of all God's people upon earth, yet in holding fast by God's commandments there is a sure defence even against them who can kill the body. The just will live the life of faith, and therefore the just shall live by faith.

The letter of the alphabet for these lines is *Caph*, or *K*.

In æternum, Domine.

89. O LORD, Thy word : endureth for ever in heaven.

90. Thy truth also remaineth from one generation to another : Thou hast laid the foundation of the earth, and it abideth.

91. They continue this day according to Thine ordinance : for all things serve Thee.

LXX. By Thy ordinance the day continues.

Each word that proceedeth from the mouth of God endureth unto eternity. The angels that stand near Him hear it, and obey it without failing in the smallest point. The firmament of heaven, and its orbs and planets, each after their generation follow on in the appointed course which their Maker has willed that they fulfil. The whole universe of heaven above and earth beneath came into being by His word, and exists according to His laws; and not only so, but when heaven and earth shall pass away, His words shall not pass away. His truth ever abideth the same—holy, perfect, good, to all generations of men,—to the generations that were

under the Law, and to the generations under the Gospel,—to the generations of those kept by grace from sin, and to the generations of the saints crowned with glory. His truth remaineth, for in Him Who is the Truth hath He laid the foundation of the earth, and in Him alone it abideth; for ‘other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus.’ In Him, and through Him only, do all things appear orderly and good before the eye of God, so that He should not destroy them; in Him, and through Him only, can the creatures of earth serve their God, and do their part in fulfilling His eternal law.

92. If my delight had not been in Thy law : I should have perished in my trouble.

93. I will never forget Thy commandments : for with them Thou hast quickened me.

94. I am Thine, O save me : for I have sought Thy commandments.

95. The ungodly laid wait for me to destroy me : but I will consider Thy testimonies.

In loving Him Whose word is truth, do we gain grace, and strength, and comfort, to save us from perishing in the sins and troubles of mortality. In His commandments, and in that Holy Spirit which bringeth them to our remembrance, is life indeed; for unless He quickeneth us, we perish. No man quickeneth his own soul,—though we can all destroy our own souls. Therefore should we long to be, not

our own, but His. In the quickening of His Spirit, our cry must be, 'I am Thine, O save me,' for I have sought not my own lusts, by which I was my own, but Thy commandments, that I might be now and for ever Thine! In vain will the ungodly and the spirits of evil seek to injure him whose mind and soul are thus given up to the testimonies and promises of Almighty Love.

96. I see that all things come to an end :
but Thy commandment is exceeding broad.

LXX. I have seen an end of all perfection.

Watching and waiting thus in the patience of the Holy Ghost, the saint of God sees how all earthly knowledge, skill, beauty, power, design and working, come to an end. Human art is long, but it comes to an end; yea, even some of the things of the spirit—endurance and prayer, faith and hope, will come to an end. All our strivings and all our aims, of whatever sort they be, come to their end and cease. They are of time and for a time: all that is of man, and from man, is and must be finite; the way and work of God alone is infinite. His commandment is exceeding broad, reaching from that which is without beginning to that which hath no end, extending from eternity to eternity. His commandment is love,—love endless and boundless; for what can be vaster than that on which hang all the Law and the Prophets? Pray we, then, that all our ends may have no end but Him; strive we that

all our strivings may be lost in His all-embracing love!

The letter which begins the verses of this portion is *Lamed*, or L.

Quomodo dilexi!

97. LORD, what love have I unto Thy law : all the day long is my study in it.

98. Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies : for they are ever with me.

99. I have more understanding than my teachers : for Thy testimonies are my study.

100. I am wiser than the aged : because I keep Thy commandments.

The breadth of God's commandment is love,—
'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.' If, then, we love that which His law biddeth us to love, we cannot but love the law likewise which biddeth us. Truly we may spend both the passing day of this mortal life and the unending day of eternity in the study of this one law. And what better study is there than that wherein Christ is the Teacher, and His Church the school; where they who learn are teachers, and that which is learned is holiness and love; and the end of the learning is life eternal, even the knowledge of God and His Son Whom He hath sent? Such a scholar is wiser than his enemies—that is, than the wicked who have cast off the love of Christ; he is wiser than his teachers—than

the prophets, who saw but dimly and afar off the coming of Incarnate Love; he is wiser than the aged—than the patriarchs and holy men of old time, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the promises were made, but who received not as yet the fulfilment of them. The child of God who loves his Father, may sit among the prophets, and psalmists, and teachers of elder days, as his Lord sat among the Rabbis in the temple, hearing and questioning; learning, indeed, from them, and yet, through higher grace, wiser even than they.

101. I have refrained my feet from every evil way : that I may keep Thy word.

102. I have not shrunk from Thy judgments : for Thou teachest me.

103. O how sweet are Thy words unto my throat : yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth.

104. Through Thy commandments I get understanding : therefore I hate all evil ways.

By doing what is right we come both to know right and to be better able to do it. Such an one will shrink and turn from all evil, but will not shrink from the fear of God's righteousness,—will continue in his Saviour's word, and so will be His disciple indeed. To him will the words of God become sweet indeed, above all earthly sweetness, enlightening the eyes of his soul, as Jonathan found his eyes enlightened by tasting of the honeycomb.

They will bestow the humility of obedience and the exaltation of wisdom; they will give the love of what God loves, and the hatred of what He hates, even all evil ways.

Each of the verses in this portion begins with the letter *Mem*, or *M*. With verses 97, 100, compare St. Peter i. 8—12.

Morning Prayer.

Lucerna pedibus meis.

105. THY word is a lantern unto my feet : and a light unto my paths.

‘The Word was God;’ yet was He made flesh, that we might behold His glory. ‘He was the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.’ We are as travellers journeying through the night of this mortal life, with weak and stumbling feet along the dark and difficult ways of human duty: Christ alone, the ‘Light of Light,’ can save us from falling, and guide us from erring. Only those lights shine truly that are made bright with that one Light; only those words can make our path clear to us, which were spoken of or by that one Word. Thus is the sure word of Scripture full of light to us, ‘whereunto we shall do well that we take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in our hearts.’

106. I have sworn, and am stedfastly purposed : to keep Thy righteous judgements.

107. I am troubled above measure : quicken me, O Lord, according to Thy word.

108. Let the free-will offerings of my mouth please Thee, O Lord : and teach me Thy judgements.

109. My soul is alway in my hand : yet do I not forget Thy law.

LXX. My soul is always in Thy hand.

110. The ungodly have laid a snare for me : but yet I swerved not from Thy commandments.

111. Thy testimonies have I claimed as mine heritage for ever : and why? they are the very joy of my heart.

112. I have applied my heart to fulfil Thy statutes alway : even unto the end.

As one walking by the lantern of the word of Christ, and bound by the sacraments of Christ the Word, the redeemed soul can steadfastly determine to abide in the way of its righteous Lord. It may be distressed, yet is the Lord and Giver of life always abiding with it. The servant of God is ever offering before Him 'the calves of the lips,' the free-will offerings of prayer, and the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving; yea, he has his very soul in his hand, that he may present it to Him Who will keep it for ever for him safe in His own Almighty hand. The suggestions of sin, which the Evil one lays like

snare in the path of the obedient, will be passed by and escaped by him, because he will not swerve either to the right or to the left from the straight way of the commandments. Thus does the righteousness of God shine forth before him, an everlasting heritage, an everlasting joy, an everlasting duty. His heart is eager to fulfil the righteousness of God, that by loving Him for ever he may attain for ever unto Him Whom he loveth.

The initial of the verses of the fifteenth portion is *Nun*, or N.

Iniquos odio habui.

113. I HATE them that imagine evil things : but Thy law do I love.

114. Thou art my defence and shield : and my trust is in Thy word.

115. Away from me, ye wicked : I will keep the commandments of my God.

The love of God is the hatred of wickedness. The follower of Christ will hate the evil things which the unbelieving dwell on in their thoughts, while yet he will seek that sinners may be brought to the knowledge of the truth. The thoughts of his Lord, and faith in His word, will be a defence and shield against their seductions and their evil example : yet at last, if he find that intercourse with them brings himself down to their worldliness and unbelief, he must separate himself from them, rather than fail in his duty to God. We may not make

ourselves worse, even in attempting to make others better.

116. O stablish me according to Thy word, that I may live : and let me not be disappointed of my hope.

117. Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe : yea, my delight shall be ever in Thy statutes.

For we are but weak at best, and we need a Stronger than ourselves, and a Wiser than ourselves, to preserve us in the true life, and to save us from that bitterest of disappointments—the loss of the hope which we have in Christ. Therefore, like a soldier wounded and fainting in the battle, we cry to our Champion to stand by us and to hold us up a little while, until the enemy be past; knowing that if He hold us up Whose hand holds up the universe, we cannot fall, but shall indeed be safe.

118. Thou hast trodden down all them that depart from Thy statutes : for they imagine but deceit.

119. Thou puttest away all the ungodly of the earth like dross : therefore I love Thy testimonies.

LXX. I have counted all the sinners of the earth transgressors,
Therefore have I loved Thy testimonies.

120. My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee :
and I am afraid of Thy judgements.

All those that transgress the law of righteousness have fallen, are cast down; they are found enemies of God, their thoughts become untrue, their trust is in falsehood; and, unless they repent and be raised by Him, they will be trampled with all other enemies beneath the footstool of Christ. Their doom is the doom of dross, of 'reprobate silver.' He will put away the ungodly of the earth like the dross of the earth. 'Thus saith the Lord, Because ye are all become dross, behold, as they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it to melt it; even so will I gather you in Mine anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there and melt you.' Well may mortal flesh tremble for fear of Him Whose justice is so searching and Whose judgments are so terrible!

The initial letter of this portion is *Samech*, or S. With verse 119 compare Ezek. xxii. 18—22; Jer. vi. 28—30; Wis. ii. 16.

Feci judicium.

121. I DEAL with the thing that is lawful and right : O give me not over unto mine oppressors.

122. Make Thou Thy servant to delight in that which is good : that the proud do me no wrong.

123. Mine eyes are wasted away with looking for Thy health : and for the word of Thy righteousness.

124. O deal with Thy servant according unto Thy loving mercy : and teach me Thy statutes.

125. I am Thy servant, O grant me understanding : that I may know Thy testimonies.

They who do what is right and good may be oppressed, but will never be given over to their oppressors. The grace that is with them is stronger than the world which is against them. The joy which arises from our doing that which is good, which is the same as the keeping the Law of God, will be a safeguard against all the wrong and harm which the proud and the wicked may think to do our souls. The time may indeed seem long while we are being tempted by them; our eyes may waste and grow dim with watching and looking upward to the Source of salvation, but our waiting will be overpaid. He for Whom we wait will deal with us in His wondrous mercy; He will teach us to obey Him as His servants, that we may come to know His will, and when we know His will we shall be reckoned as His friends.

126. It is time for Thee, Lord, to lay to Thine hand : for they have destroyed Thy law.

It is time for Him to begin His work of regeneration in us now in the time of this mortal life, in which the tables of our nature, on which once the law of God was written by His own finger, have

been broken by Adam in his disobedience, even as Moses brake the tables of the Law in his anger on Sinai. Alas! man has made the word of God concerning him of none effect, by his own traditions of self-will, and disobedience, and pride!

127. For I love Thy commandments : above gold and precious stone.

128. Therefore hold I straight all Thy commandments : and all false ways I utterly abhor.

But the man of God esteems the commandments of Him Who hath called him, as a treasure far above all the precious things of earth. He keeps unto all the commandments of God, not choosing one and neglecting another at his own pleasure, but 'rightly dividing the word of truth;' not going and looking on them and then passing by on the other side, but abiding in all of them; and shunning all self-deceit, and half-truths which are but falsehoods.

The verses of this division commence with *Ain*, a letter for which Western languages have no equivalent. Verse 122 is said by the Rabbis to be the only verse in which the Law is not spoken of by name.

Mirabilia.

129. Thy testimonies are wonderful : therefore doth my soul keep them.

130. When Thy word goeth forth : it giveth light and understanding unto the simple.

131. I opened my mouth, and drew in my

breath : for my delight was in Thy commandments.

132. O look Thou upon me, and be merciful unto me : as Thou usest to do unto those that love Thy Name.

133. Order my steps in Thy word : and so shall no wickedness have dominion over me.

Strange are the mercies of our Father which are revealed to us ; wonderful is His power. With Him Who said in the beginning, ‘ Let there be light, and there was light,’ speaking is doing ; His words are deeds. He hath given the highest wisdom to the lowliest of His elect ; He hath hidden the wonders of His testimonies from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes ; He hath spoken, and little ones have understood. Therefore let us, like children wearied with the toil and heat of this world, and panting with open mouth for the refreshings of His grace, cry to Him with longing hearts for His favouring smile and for His mercy, which He never refuses to them that love His Name. He will ever give guidance in goodness, and deliverance from wickedness to them who crave it of Him.

134. O deliver me from the wrongful dealings of men : and so shall I keep Thy commandments.

135. Shew the light of Thy countenance upon Thy servant : and teach me Thy statutes.

Oftentimes the wrongful dealings of men, of others and of ourselves, like a cloud of smoke arising from the earth and obscuring the face of the sun, hide from us for awhile the light of the countenance of God: but He soon clears it all away, and looks down upon us in loving mercy as before, lighting for us the path of obedience, and brightening our way unto Himself.

136. Mine eyes gush out with water : because men keep not Thy law.

For these, the transgressions of others and of ourselves, there is great cause that our eyes should weep. The Man of sorrows wept over Jerusalem when He beheld her in her beauty, which was so soon to fade. The beloved disciple ‘wept much because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book’ in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. Should not we, too, weep, looking upon a perishing world, in which the law of its Maker is continually broken, and in which so few look to Him Who alone was worthy to ‘open the book and to loose the seals thereof?’

The initial letter of these verses is *Pe*, or *P*.

Justus es, Domine.

137. RIGHTEOUS art Thou, O Lord : and true is Thy judgement.

138. The testimonies that Thou hast commanded : are exceeding righteous and true.

139. My zeal hath even consumed me :

because mine enemies have forgotten Thy words.

140. Thy word is tried to the uttermost : and Thy servant loveth it.

LXX. Thy wrath is fiery exceedingly.

Righteous and true are the judgments of our God, righteous and true are His promises; yea, all the ways of the King of Saints are just and true: will not, then, the servant of Christ burn with indignation—like his Lord in the temple, which the buyers and sellers had profaned—when he beholds the enemies of the cross of Christ forgetting, setting at nought, despising the words of righteousness and truth, which are all in all to our ruined world? The ungodly are as dross; but there is no dross in the Gospel of God. It is refined and made pure to the uttermost in the fire of the Holy Spirit; therefore will the servant who hears his Lord's sayings accept it, and keep it, and love it.

141. I am small, and of no reputation : yet do I not forget Thy commandments.

142. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness : and Thy law is the truth.

143. Trouble and heaviness have taken hold upon me : yet is my delight in Thy commandments.

144. The righteousness of Thy testimonies is everlasting : O grant me understanding, and I shall live.

As David among his brethren in the house of his father Jesse; as Judah led captive in the presence of the Assyrians and the Babylonians; as the Church of Christ in her beginning, surrounded by the rage and might of the Jews and heathens; so is the child of God who bears in mind his Lord's words in the midst of those who forget them. He may be in himself small and of no reputation, but on his side is the everlasting righteousness of God, with him is the truth. Therefore in that trouble and heaviness which come to every son of Adam, he will have a secret store of joy in doing his Saviour's will. He will love Him and keep His commandments; he will win for himself a righteousness which no time can fade, through Him Who died for his sins and rose for his justification; he will become wise with the knowledge of Him Whom truly to know is everlasting life.

The initial letter here is the Hebrew letter *Tsaddi*, or *Ta*. St. Augustine, in his Commentary on verse 139, says that some copies read, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up," (St. John ii. 17).

Ebening Prayer.

Clamavi in toto corde meo.

145. I CALL with my whole heart : hear me, O Lord, I will keep Thy statutes.

146. Yea, even unto Thee do I call : help me, and I shall keep Thy testimonies.

147. Early in the morning do I cry unto Thee : for in Thy word is my trust.

148. Mine eyes prevent the night-watches : that I might be occupied in Thy words.

149. Hear my voice, O Lord, according unto Thy loving-kindness : quicken me, according as Thou art wont.

The solemn, earnest cry of the heart to God will never fail of being heard by Him. We call with our whole heart when we pray without wandering thoughts. Such prayers are rare,—they only can pray them who have determined to keep God's statutes, and in that determination cry again and yet again for assisting grace to aid them. Early in the morning, and through the watches of the night, in the dawn of life and in the night-watches of mortality, must we be earnest in meditating upon the Gospel of our heavenly Father, in purifying our affections, in awakening our love, and then lifting up the accents of our soul in the cry, first for mercy, and then for life-giving grace. For God, first, according to His loving-kindness, takes away punishment from sinners, and, after, gives them life when they are made righteous in His sight.

150. They draw nigh that of malice persecute me : and are far from Thy law.

151. Be Thou nigh at hand, O Lord : for all Thy commandments are true.

152. As concerning Thy testimonies, I have

known long since : that Thou hast grounded them for ever.

It is oftentimes in the moments of our most fervent prayer, that the enemies of our salvation draw nigh to lead us from the law of God ; but then He to Whom we cry draws nigh too. Where two or three are gathered together,—yea, where one is calling with his whole heart, there is Jesus nigh. For His promises are firm and sure for ever, for He that made them is an eternal King ; and He hath said unto His people, ‘Behold, I am with you always.’

The initial letter here is *Koph*, or K.

Vide humilitatem.

153. O CONSIDER mine adversity, and deliver me : for I do not forget Thy law.

154. Avenge Thou my cause, and deliver me : quicken me, according to Thy word.

155. Health is far from the ungodly : for they regard not Thy statutes.

156. Great is Thy mercy, O Lord : quicken me, as Thou art wont.

157. Many there are that trouble me, and persecute me : yet do I not swerve from Thy testimonies.

158. It grieveth me when I see the transgressors : because they keep not Thy law.

Sorrows and adversities happen to all ; but when

they come to a servant of God, he has a refuge which the wicked have not. He has the refuge of prayer; he calls to his loving Father to remember him; he appeals to his righteous Advocate to plead his cause, and to deliver him; he looks to Him to sustain his life, from Whom he first received it. It is not so with the wicked: salvation and health of soul are far from them; because they regard not the law of God, He will not regard them. But His mercy is great to the faithful and obedient: it may be that many trouble them, yet does their Lord give them grace to persevere; and they, persecuted though they may be, can yet mourn over the sinners who persecute them, for their transgressions and unrepentance of heart.

159. Consider, O Lord, how I love Thy commandments : O quicken me, according to Thy loving-kindness.

160. Thy word is true from everlasting : all the judgements of Thy righteousness endure for evermore.

They will plead before Him, how they love the commandments of Him Who loved them; and so will rely with firm confidence upon the everlasting truth and the unchanging love of their Saviour and their God. For He hath said, 'Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My Law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the

moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but My righteousness shall be for ever, and My salvation from generation to generation.' All that is true is eternal, and all that is eternal is truth.

Resh, or R, commences the twentieth portion of this Psalm.

Principes persecuti sunt.

161. PRINCES have persecuted me without a cause : but my heart standeth in awe of Thy word.

162. I am as glad of Thy word : as one that findeth great spoils.

The faithful soul hath always her portion of suffering. They 'who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' The powerful of the earth have their threatening or their mocking words, but the heart that stands in awe of God's word will stand in no awe of man's; it will be able to scorn man when he would persecute, and to overcome Satan when he would seduce. Yes, in that word, the everlasting Gospel of the glorious God, we find again those spoils which the strong man armed had once taken from us, but which the Stronger than he hath regained and restored to us again. We find again there innocence, holiness, grace and communion with our God, of which we once were despoiled in Eden.

163. As for lies, I hate and abhor them : but Thy law do I love.

He that loveth that word which is 'true and faithful,' cannot but shrink from and hate all lies, which are in eternal opposition to it. All sin is a lie, because it is contrary to the truth of God. 'The devil was a liar from the beginning.' They who love the truth shall be eternally with Him that is true; 'they shall overcome and inherit all things: but the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.'

164. Seven times a day do I praise Thee : because of Thy righteous judgements.

He who loveth God will be praising Him all the day long, even the whole day of his whole being. He may fall into sin, as the most righteous will, seven times a day, yet seven times a day will he arise and repent, and be forgiven, and praise Him Who forgiveth him for His righteous judgments, —righteous in condemning sin, and righteous in granting pardon to repentance.

165. Great is the peace that they have who love Thy law : and they are not offended at it.

166. Lord, I have looked for Thy saving health : and done after Thy commandments.

167. My soul hath kept Thy testimonies : and loved them exceedingly.

168. I have kept Thy commandments and testimonies : for all my ways are before Thee.

Thus does he dwell in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on the law of his Lord. The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, delivereth him from all stumbling and from all doubting. 'Whoso keepeth His word, in him is the love of God perfected : hereby know we that we are in Him.' From the watch-tower of obedience and of love, he looks forth for the far-off appearing of salvation and of the Saviour, knowing that all his ways and all his doings are plain before the face of God, and that those ways only which are before Him, can be ways of pleasantness and paths of peace.

The letter of this division of the Psalm is *Shin*, or *Sh*.

Appropinquet deprecatio.

169. LET my complaint come before Thee, O Lord : give me understanding, according to Thy word.

170. Let my supplication come before Thee : deliver me, according to Thy word.

The spiritually-minded in this life are 'sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing,'—rejoicing, yet with something of penitential sorrow always mingling with their joy; complaining of themselves, rejoicing in their Lord. They would have their confession and their prayer come nigh to Him Who is ever nigh to them that are of a contrite spirit, Who hath promised

understanding to them that ask, and pardon to them that repent, and deliverance to them that pray.

171. My lips shall speak of Thy praise : when Thou hast taught me Thy statutes.

172. Yea, my tongue shall sing of Thy word : for all Thy commandments are righteous.

173. Let Thine hand help me : for I have chosen Thy commandments.

174. I have longed for Thy saving health, O Lord : and in Thy law is my delight.

175. O let my soul live, and it shall praise Thee : and Thy judgements shall help me.

Yet are praises ever intermingled with their prayers. Psalms of melody take their turn with intercessions and with resolvings. Longings for salvation join here with thanksgivings for the hope of life eternal, until the hour come when, for the saints of God, the voice of prayer shall cease, and praise alone shall fill their souls for ever and ever.

176. I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost : O seek Thy servant, for I do not forget Thy commandments.

Yet now and here, notwithstanding the revealing of our Father's will, notwithstanding the purity of His Law, the loveliness of His truth, the holiness of His statutes, the righteousness of His judgments, the straightness of His way, the faithfulness of His

testimonies, the power of His commandments,—notwithstanding these, and our own longings, through His grace, to accept them, to abide in them, to keep them, we have yet need daily to turn to Him and say, ‘I have erred and strayed from Thy ways like a lost sheep.’ Yea, in spite of all should we be lost,—lost for ever, did not He Who is the good Shepherd leave the ninety-nine who sin not in heaven, and come down ever and anon to seek and save our wandering souls. In Him we have the holiness which we have not in ourselves. ‘For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth.’ ‘He is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,’ Who is the Word, the letters of Whose Name are written upon us in our baptism, and Whose Name should be the last word our lips should speak on earth; Who is the beginning of all knowledge and the end of all learning,—‘Who said, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.’

The letter *Tau*, or T, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, is the initial letter of the twenty-second portion of this wonderful and complicated Psalm. In the method of its composition, in which each eight verses in succession begin with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, it resembles the alphabetical Psalms and the Lamentations of Jeremiah, except that its poetical construction is far more intricate. It, on this account, had given to it the name of “the Great Alphabet,” by the Masorites who put the last corrections to the Jewish canon of Scripture. Origen says that it is alphabetical because it contains the elements or principles of all knowledge and wisdom, and that it repeats each letter eight times, because eight is the number of perfection. There is great doubt as to who was its author: many writers have ascribed it to David; others have suggested Daniel, on account of certain of the verses seeming to have a reference to events in the

life of that prophet. It appears, however, more probable that Ezra was the author, and there are very strong reasons for believing it to be his. The style of the poetry is later than the age of David; the Psalm has few points of resemblance to those of David, and there is no title assigning it to him. It was almost certainly written during or after the captivity. The Talmud states that the people of Israel during the captivity had quite forgotten the Law, and that Ezra, by great efforts and care, brought it to their knowledge again. It is highly probable that this Psalm was one of the means which Ezra then used to recall the word of God to their minds, and to stir up in them a love for it; and the nature of its construction would render it peculiarly adapted for being committed to memory. The connection of the thoughts, and the one idea which runs through the whole of this spiritual meditation on the Law of God, is most difficult to discover; yet it must not be doubted that there is such a connecting idea. Some divines, following a suggestion of Rabbi Kimchi, consider it to be a meditation on the Law under its different names of Testimonies, Statutes, Judgments, Word, Commandments, Way and Truth; and in its different aspects,—as innate in the heart, as sacramental, as revealed, as discerned by the conscience, or manifested in providence, or commanded on Sinai. It is very hard to fully trace out this. Or the Psalm may be a history of the inner life of grace in man's soul, displaying itself in praise, prayer, good resolutions, self-consolation, penitence, obedience, humility. Or it may be that the whole Psalm should lead us to meditate on Christ, "the end of the Law," (Rom. x. 4); and so its alphabetical character would refer to Him as "the Alpha and Omega," (Rev. i. 8, 11). St. Augustine, who in his Commentary has left us thirty-two discourses on this Psalm, says of it, "As often as I began to reflect on this Psalm, it always exceeded the utmost grasp of my faculties; for in proportion as it seems more open, so much the more deep does it appear to me, so that I cannot shew how deep it is. For in others which are understood with difficulty, though the sense lie hid in obscurity, yet the obscurity itself is obvious; but in this Psalm, even this is not the case, since on the surface it seems not to require a commentator, but only a reader or listener."

Morning Prayer.

: **PSALM CXX. *Ad Dominum.***

1. WHEN I was in trouble I called upon the Lord : and He heard me.

See the wondrous advantage of trouble,—that it makes us call upon our God; and again see the wondrous readiness of mercy, that when we call He heareth us! Very blessed are they that mourn while they are travelling the long upward journey from the Galilee of the Gentiles of this lower world to the heavenly Jerusalem, the high and holy city of the saints of God.

2. Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips : and from a deceitful tongue.

3. What reward shall be given or done unto thee, thou false tongue : even mighty and sharp arrows, with hot burning coals.

Heb. Arrows of the mighty man, with burning fuel of broom.

Often the first step which a Christian makes in this his heavenward pilgrimage calleth forth the reproaches of the lying lips of the wicked. As soon as he begins to repent, to desire to ascend from earth and to leave behind him worldly, temporal, and sinful things, to count earthly gain as nothing, and heavenly gain as all, so soon do his enemies speak evil and falsely of him; and pretended counsellors, with the deceitful tongues of false doctrine, strive to draw him astray from salvation. Of

all the dangers that beset the soul that is journeying in the path of life, there are none against which it has need to pray more earnestly than against the deceitful tongue. And there are none who shall be pierced with bitterer anguish, who shall writhe in fiercer agony beneath the burning wrath of divine vengeance, than they who have made their neighbours to go astray by revilings, or by flattery, or by the seductions of false doctrine and of unbelief.

4. Wo is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech : and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar.

LXX. Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged.

5. My soul hath long dwelt among them : that are enemies unto peace.

6. I labour for peace, but when I speak unto them thereof : they make them ready to battle.

But he in whose heart are indeed God's ways—the ways of holy love—will not be easily led astray ; he will groan, indeed, for the length of time in which he is compelled to company among strange and heathen men, like the wandering foreigners who sprang from Mesech, the son of Japhet, or to be surrounded with those that are fierce and remorseless, like the Arabian plunderers of the tribe of Kedar ; but his groan will go up to God. In this life we dwell among all that is opposed to peace ; the love for peace is the love for Christ, the

Giver of peace: but they who seek perfect peace here, will not find it here. The very name of Him Who is our peace is but too often the watchword of battle. But notwithstanding all that hindereth, let us labour for peace, and journey on our way; and at length, when we have passed out of this lower scene of strife and darkness, of tempest and confusion, we shall arrive where all is clear, and pure, and calm, where love is satisfied, and peace made perfect.

This Psalm, and the fourteen which follow it, form a class by themselves. They are full of quiet beauty, and simple, earnest piety; and the time of their composition extends from the reigns of David and Solomon to the return from the captivity. They are entitled in the Hebrew, "Songs of the goings up," which the LXX. render "Psalms of the ascents," the Vulgate, "Step Psalms," and the English version, "Psalms of degrés." The meaning of this title has been much disputed: some of the Rabbis, as Abenezra and Kimchi, conjecture that the word means an elevation of the voice, and that these Psalms were sung in a high treble tone. Rabbi Maimonides supposes that they were sung by the Levites upon an elevated platform, which was situated near the east gate of the temple: with this opinion Luther agrees, who calls them "Songs from the upper choirs." The Talmudists imagine that they were so called from being sung on fifteen steps or stairs, which led from the outer courts of the temple to that of the Levites—one Psalm being sung on each step. St. Athanasius and St. Chrysostom consider that they were used solemnly on the return of the captives from Babylon; and this view is supported by the fact that the same Hebrew word is employed in Ezra vii. 9 to express the "going up" from Babylon. But undoubtedly the best translation of this title is "The Songs of the Pilgrimages," and the most probable explanation of its meaning is, that these Psalms formed the devotions of those who, according to the commands of their law, went up to the great festivals at Jerusalem. The words "going up" are constantly used in this sense in the Scriptures. This custom had never been lost by the Israelites, though they often made only a yearly visit to Jerusalem, (1 Sam. i.

3, 7; St. Luke iii. 41, 42). It will throw great light on the meaning of these Psalms or songs, if we consider them to have been recited at different stages of their journey by the caravans of pilgrims who came up from Galilee and other more distant parts, to keep the Pass-over, or some of the other feasts, at Jerusalem. These fifteen songs would form "The pilgrim-book;" and these very Psalms were probably thus used by our Lord's parents, and by Himself and His disciples, in their "goings up" to Jerusalem. Psalm cxxi. would be adapted to the first setting out of the pious Israelite from the extremities of Canaan to visit the Sanctuary, and imploring protection from God on his journey. Verse 4 speaks of Meshech, who was one of the sons of Japheth, (Gen. x. 2,) perhaps in allusion to the Scythians from the Moschian mountains on the Caspian Sea, for we know from profane history that the Scythians had more than once made incursions into Syria. The Kedarenes were a tribe of wandering Arabs.

PSALM CXXI. *Levavi oculos.*

1. I WILL lift up mine eyes unto the hills :
from whence cometh my help.

2. My help cometh even from the Lord :
who hath made heaven and earth.

From the vale of this earthly life, in which the very Son of God walked when He humbled Himself and suffered, we lift up our eyes to the heights of the true Jerusalem, where He dwells Who is our Help and Strength; even as the travellers from beyond Jordan, as night and its dangers closed round them, looked towards the temple of God, with its pinnacles of gold and marble glistening like snow in the brightness of the setting sun. It was not their own beauty or glory with which Sion and the hills around her shone; but it was the earthly dwelling-place of the Creator of heaven and earth which was their ornament: so the Church and her teachers shine amid

this world's darkness ; but they shine not with their own light, but His ' Who is the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world !'

3. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved : and He that keepeth thee will not sleep.

4. Behold, He that keepeth Israel : shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5. The Lord Himself is thy keeper : the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand ;

6. So that the sun shall not burn thee by day : neither the moon by night.

His grace is ever sufficient for us. In the rugged ways of our pilgrimage He will keep our foot from stumbling, and our hearts and affections from sin and the desire of what is evil. In the night of ease and forgetfulness, though we may slumber and forsake our watch, He will not forsake his. We cannot keep ourselves who can scarcely watch one hour ; but He is our Keeper Who on earth slumbered not, but continued all night in prayer to God, and Who in heaven, having raised Himself from the sleep of death, now ' ever liveth to make intercession for' His own. He Who is at the right hand of the Father is always at our right hand, by day and by night, a shelter from the burning heat of temptation, and a refuge from the chill, cold influence of sorrow, of desolateness, and of want.

7. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil : yea, it is even He that shall keep thy soul.

8. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in : from this time forth for evermore.

Perfectly and altogether will our Keeper, our Saviour, and God grant our daily prayer, ‘ Deliver us from evil,’ if we but ask Him with a perfect heart. He sees ‘ that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves,’ and He will keep us from all evil—from the evil we know and see, and from the evil we do not know and cannot see. He will keep us not only outwardly in our bodies, but inwardly in our souls. He will defend us not only from the adversities which may happen to the body, but also from the evil thoughts which assault and hurt the soul. He will keep us in all we do, from our birth to our death,—from our entering into this world of trial until we go out from it again,—from our going out from the power of sin until we enter into the immortality He hath prepared for us. He Who said to Jacob, ‘ Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest,’ has said also to the people of His Church, ‘ Behold I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’

This is the second of these “ traveller-songs,” which appears to be distinctly intended for an evening prayer for protection during the perils of the night. The pilgrim, while chanting it, had before his eyes or his mind the hills of Jerusalem. Verse 6 probably refers to a belief very prevalent in tropical countries, that the beams of the moon are highly injurious to those who sleep exposed to them. The name of Keeper, which is again and again given to God in this Psalm, is founded on the promise made to Jacob while sleeping in the night alone at Bethel, (Gen. xxxviii. 15). With verse 8 compare Deut^h xxviii. 6.

PSALM cxxii. *Lætatus sum.*

1. I WAS glad when they said unto me : we will go into the house of the Lord.

2. Our feet shall stand in thy gates : O Jerusalem.

Heavenly love is the one feeling which makes us press on in this our pilgrimage. It is love which makes us rejoice when we can say to others, 'We will go into the house of the Lord.' It was love which made the prophets, the apostles, and the martyrs cry aloud, even from a distant age, these words of cheering and of joy to us and to the whole Church. It is love which makes us receive their word with gladness, and fills us with the glorious hope that our feet too shall stand in the gates of the Jerusalem above. It is love which guides us in the way which is Christ Himself. It is love that checks our weariness and our impatience in our journey, and bids us rather dwell on the rest which awaits us in our abiding city, and the union with those who now are citizens there, who once were travellers, like us, from the earthly Galilee to the heavenly Jerusalem.

3. Jerusalem is built as a city : that is at unity in itself.

4. For thither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord : to testify unto Israel, to give thanks unto the Name of the Lord.

5. For there is the seat of judgment : even the seat of the house of David.

Our Jerusalem is the Church of the living God ; her builder is Christ, the eternal Son, and she is founded by Him here in earth, and reared up and made perfect unto Him in heaven. She is built with living stones, even each one of His redeemed—stones cut from the hills of earth by the hands which were stretched upon the cross, and squared by the Holy Ghost, that they may be placed in order in that everlasting structure. Those spiritual stones are built into a spiritual city,—changeless like Him Who changeth not, and in unity with itself, like Him Who is ever One. The law of her being, the measure of her walls, the height of her battlements, the beauty of her courts, is oneness, and unity, and self-agreement. To her the tribes of the true Israel, the redeemed of God have ever gone, are ever going, and shall ever go. She does not descend to them, but they ascend to her, bearing witness to their brethren in the world by their guileless walk, and thanking their God continually as wayfarers, until they thank Him perfectly before His throne. In that high city is the throne of God, for heaven is His throne,—the throne of wisdom, the throne of mercy, the throne of judgment ; and there, too, are the twelve thrones, upon which the apostles of the Son of David shall sit when their King shall come at last to judge the world.

6. O pray for the peace of Jerusalem : they shall prosper that love thee.

7. Peace be within thy walls : and plenteousness within thy palaces.

Therefore should the citizens of that city in the fulness of aspiring love call upon each other in turn to pray for the peace of the Jerusalem above, the Church 'which is the mother of us all,'—to ask peace for her whose name is peace. To pray for her is to pray for ourselves; to love her prosperity is to love our own. In her truth are we taught truth; in her grace are we made rich. Therefore must we daily pray that there may be unity and peace, even the peace of God, within her walls; and that there may be ever the assurance of faith and the rich gifts of grace, and the comfortings of sacraments abounding in her houses and palaces of prayer.

8. For my brethren and companions' sakes :
I will wish thee prosperity.

9. Yea, because of the house of the Lord
our God : I will seek to do thee good.

And not for our selves' sake only, but for our brethren's sake in the faith, and for the salvation of the companions of our pilgrimage, should we pray that these blessings may ever abound within the Church. Yea, we must seek her good because she is the Church of the living God, the temple in which Jesus Christ is built and joined together with His elect in an eternal and changeless union. Therefore to Him in His Church do we ascribe all good, because from Him, through His Church, do all good things proceed to us.

This is a "pilgrim-song" by David. Its object, perhaps, was to attract the tribes of Israel to Jerusalem, and to teach them to look upon Jerusalem not only as the seat of civil government (verse 5)

but also as the spiritual and religious capital of the nation, because there the ark of God abode in the tabernacle which David had reared for it on Sion (verse 9). It is probably one of the earliest of this series of pilgrim-songs ; as before the time of David the people would have gone to Shiloh, and perhaps, during his reign, many might have kept their feast at Gibeon, where the tabernacle of Moses was, though the ark had long been separated from it. He wished gradually to lead them to visit and love Jerusalem, then newly established as a royal city and a holy place. The spiritual meaning of Jerusalem is obvious. There is in the latter verses in the Hebrew a beautiful allusion to the meaning of the word *Shalom*, i. e. "peace," in the name of Jerusalem, which the Fathers interpret "The vision of peace."

PSALM CXXIII. *Ad Te levavi oculos meos.*

1. UNTO Thee lift I up mine eyes : O Thou that dwellest in the heavens.

This is the sigh of the pilgrim who ascendeth and loveth, and ascendeth because he loveth. He is ascending from earth to heaven, and while he is ascending, unto whom should he lift his eyes, but unto Him that dwelleth in heaven? We ascend to heaven each time we think of God. In that ascent lies all goodness : if we would repent, we must look not on ourselves, but on Him ; if we would be humble, we must look not on ourselves, but on Him ; if we would truly love, we must look not on ourselves, but on Him Who dwelleth in the heavens. If we would have Him turn His eyes from our sins, we must turn our eyes unto His mercy and truth.

2. Behold, even as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress :

even so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until He have mercy upon us.

Like servants depend upon their master, in whose power they are, and like a handmaid depends upon her mistress, both for reward and for punishment, so do we, the servants of the Lord God Almighty, depend upon Him for all we have in this life, and that which is to come. Yea, like a faithful servant watches attentively the slightest motions and pointings out of the wishes of his lord, so do we wait and watch for the indications of our Master's will, hoping through His love and power to gain the full assurance of His mercy. Each holy soul will in its degree share in the humility and the patience of the Blessed among women, who said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word.'

3. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us : for we are utterly despised.

4. Our soul is filled with the scornful reproof of the wealthy : and with the despitefulness of the proud.

We must needs look to heaven if we would obtain mercy, for if we look to earth, there is great fear lest we find it not. It is not from those who are puffed with false riches, or that are proud of earthly power, that the meek and the faithful in heart will meet with esteem or reverence. Christ, the first Wayfarer Who ascended from earth to heaven, found but shame, reproof, and spite from the mighty of the

earth; and they who follow in His steps must be ready for the same, and must therefore ever look for their defence, not to the great ones who dwell on earth, but to the greater than all, Who dwelleth in the heavens.

This 'pilgrim-song' has no date contained in its title. It is probably an early one, but would be very appropriate, in later times, to the journey through Samaria, for those who travelled to Jerusalem by that route. It was, however, more usual for those who lived in Galilee to cross the Jordan and journey southward through Peræa, and then to cross the Jordan a second time, and so to arrive at Jerusalem without passing through the hostile country of Samaria. Verse 2 probably alludes to the Eastern custom of masters and mistresses summoning their servants by clapping the hands, and then giving them directions by signs and movements of the hands, without speaking—the effect of which is to make the servant watch attentively every motion of his master's hands. It may, however, merely mean that the hand of a master dispenses both reward and punishment to his servants.

PSALM CXXIV. *Nisi quia Dominus.*

1. IF the Lord Himself had not been on our side, now may Israel say : if the Lord Himself had not been on our side, when men rose up against us ;

2. They had swallowed us up quick : when they were so wrathfully displeased at us.

3. Yea, the waters had drowned us : and the stream had gone over our soul.

4. The deep waters of the proud : had gone even over our soul.

Not only each soul, but the whole Church and Israel of God is, during her pilgrimage of this passing life, forced to confess her Lord alone to be her de-

fence in all adversity, and in all persecutions. When evil men, or evil angels, are aroused to harass God's elect, they would soon work their will, unless there were One mightier than they to take His people's part:—they would, as it were, swallow them up alive—they would sift them as wheat—they would, if they might, engulf them in the waters of death, and in those waters deeper and bitterer than death, which drown not the body, but the soul in the depths of perdition.

5. But praised be the Lord : Who hath not given us over for a prey unto their teeth.

6. Our soul is escaped even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler : the snare is broken, and we are delivered.

But He Who has made us His, and in Whose hand is our eternal life, wills not that His people should become a prey to the teeth of the devourers. He has broken the snare of hell, and hath opened the pit of death, and our souls, once 'tied and bound with the chain of our sins,' may now once again soar up to Him through the open firmament of heaven, like a wild bird set free from a broken snare.

For He hath set the bondsmen free, and made the dead alive, to Whose holy Name be ever ascribed all blessing from Israel sojourning on earth, and from Israel in rest in heaven.

7. Our help standeth in the Name of the Lord : Who hath made heaven and earth.

Yea, against the Israel of God is arrayed the ma-

lice of wickedness, strong and cunning; while on their side is the help of the Almighty, Whose love made all the worlds: and in the might of that help the wickedness of earth and hell is utterly swallowed up and lost, just as a single drop of water is consumed and vanishes within a mighty fire. He by Whose word alone the heaven and earth were built, and without Whose will not even one single sparrow falls into the snare, is our help; and in that help how can we not be safe?

This "Song of the Pilgrimages" was written "by David," and bears the plain marks of his style. The date of its composition cannot be fixed, but it was, perhaps, written during the war of the Syrians and Ammonites against Israel. (2 Sam. x. 6—19.) It would be well fitted for those who had been so far preserved from the perils of their journey, from robbers and enemies, in their way up to Jerusalem.

| PSALM CXXV. *Qui confidunt.*

1. THEY that put their trust in the Lord shall be even as the mount Sion: which may not be removed, but standeth fast for ever.

LXX. He that inhabiteth Jerusalem shall not be moved for ever.

2. The hills stand about Jerusalem: even so standeth the Lord round about His people, from this time forth for evermore.

'By faith we are saved;' by faith we are made strong. By trusting in our God we share His strength; by cleaving to His Church we become like His Church herself. As the spiritual Sion can never be moved or overthrown, for that her foundations are in eternity; so the elect of God stand

changeless and strong, like the hill of David, among the storms of this world. And like the other hills of Judæa stand round that holy mountain, as walls of rock, or as sentinel angels keeping guard round the Church of God, so does the Almighty God Himself, with all His attributes of wisdom, power, and love, maintain an everlasting watch round each one of His redeemed—a watch which lasts through the ages of this world and that which is to come.

3. For the rod of the ungodly cometh not into the lot of the righteous : lest the righteous put their hand unto wickedness.

Heb. For the sceptre of wickedness shall not rest on the lot of the righteous,

So that the righteous put not forth their hand to unrighteousness.

This is the one mighty watch that God keeps over His people, that they may not fall under the dominion of the wicked. He kept Sion from the Assyrians, that the rod of the heathen should not be stretched over the lot of Israel. He keeps His Church, that the sceptre of the Evil one should never so rule her children that they should be forced to put forth their hands, which are made to do the works of God, to do the works of death and sin. Woe for those who have so fallen under the power of the sceptre of the prince of this world, that they are compelled to do his evil service at his evil pleasure !

4. Do well, O Lord : unto those that are good and true of heart.

5. As for such as turn back unto their own wickedness : the Lord shall lead them forth with the evil-doers ; but peace shall be upon Israel.

He Who is good and true hath blessed and will bless the good and true ; for whom should He bless but them who are like Himself ? They who go straight on in the narrow way of goodness of life and truth of belief shall come to the heavenly Sion, but they who turn into the crooked paths of their own corrupt doings shall go with the apostates and the traitors unto their 'own place.' Their self-willed wanderings shall end in helpless despair, while the true Israel enjoy the fulness of the blessing of peace, which passeth knowledge and changeth not.

This song was a most appropriate one for the pilgrims when they came within sight of Jerusalem ; and the prospect round the holy city would at once suggest the thoughts in verse 2, of the enduring strength and care of God. All the hills which surround Jerusalem are higher than the city itself : on the east is the Mount of Olives ; on the south the Hill of evil counsel ; on the west the ground rises gently ; while on the north there is a ridge of high land, which joins on to the Mount of Olives. The Christian interpretation of this Psalm is confirmed by Abenezra, who declares that it refers to the days of the Messiah.

Evening Prayer.

PSALM CXXVI. *In convertendo.*

1. WHEN the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion : then were we like unto them that dream.

LXX. Then we were like those who are consoled.

2. Then was our mouth filled with laughter : and our tongue with joy.

3. Then said they among the heathen : The Lord hath done great things for them.

4. Yea, the Lord hath done great things for us already : whereof we rejoice.

Great, indeed, and passing strange, was the joy of Israel when, at the decree of Cyrus, they returned again from their long and sad captivity in Babylon, unto their own land, their birthplace, the country of their love, and the city of their God. Too strange even for full belief was it; like the joy of a dream, when the sleeper knows that he must awake, and that it will be no more. They turned from weeping by the waters of Babylon, to rejoicing over the wall of Sion, once more their own; they turned with hearts and lips rejoicing, with thoughts and words of gratitude and melody, to Him Whom even the heathen who stood by and looked on could not but confess to have done mighty things for them. And we, grafted by holy baptism into the stock of Israel, must not we too rejoice at the turning of our captivity from the power of death and sin, by the decree of a greater than Cyrus, and the bringing us back to the Jerusalem which is free, and the mother of us all? Yea, the Lord Jesus Christ hath done great things for us, whereof we too, His people, called by His name, do rejoice, and will rejoice.

5. Turn our captivity, O Lord : as the rivers in the south.

And as Israel of old prayed that He would bring, too, all their brethren scattered abroad in captivity back to their own land in one full stream, multitudinous, joyous, mighty, like the waters of Nile or of Euphrates pouring over the parching fields of the south in the hot, dry summer-tide; so now should the members of Christ's Church ever pray 'that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.'

6. They that sow in tears : shall reap in joy.

7. He that now goeth on his way weeping, and beareth forth good seed : shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him.

'Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.' Blessed often are they who sow, like husbandmen in the drought, weeping for that their labour seems thrown away, for the Lord waters with grace what they have moistened with tears, and they bring forth the full sheaves of sixty and a hundred-fold when the time for reaping comes. For as the earth needs rain, so do our souls need tears. Blessed are the tears of repentance, for Israel sowed in them when they went forth unto their captivity and desolation, and therefore did they come again, bringing with them the sheaves of joyous thankfulness and of better works. Thus did Israel,

sow and reap; thus did One greater than all sow in the season of His humility, that He might reap in the time of His second advent; and thus should we, His people, go forth with tears of repentance and the seed of good works, that He may, when He comes again with joy, bring us with Him as His sheaves, bound in the bundle of immortal life.

This song was clearly written for the return from the captivity, probably by Ezra. It was, no doubt, retained among the "songs of the Ascents," to remind the Israelites of how they had once lost the city of their joy, and of how they had been restored to it again. St. Augustine, in his commentary on this Psalm, interprets the title "a song of drawing upwards," i. e. of the going upwards to the heavenly Jerusalem.

PSALM FOR THE CHURCHING OF WOMEN.

PSALM cxxvii.. *Nisi Dominus.*

1. EXCEPT the Lord build the house : their labour is but lost that build it.

The children of men set themselves to build Babel, and their labour was lost, because the Lord did not build it with them. In Him only can we build aright, Who is at once the Temple and the Builder. So only did Solomon, according to God's promise, 'build the house of the Lord;' so only did Zerubbabel rear it again from its ruins when Israel returned from the captivity. Forty and six years, in after-times, were the Jews in building the temple, and because they built it without the Lord, their labour was lost, and one stone was not left upon another.

2. Except the Lord keep the city : the watchman waketh but in vain.

3. It is but lost labour that ye haste to rise up early, and so late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness : for so He giveth His beloved sleep.

Heb. Verily He giveth to His beloved in their sleep.

LXX. Rise after ye have sat down,

Ye who eat the bread of sorrow

While He giveth His beloved sleep.

No human foresight can provide against sorrow, no wisdom or bravery of man can preserve himself or others from calamity, unless he be acting with and in God. If the Lord keep us, if the Lord keep His Church, then both we and she are safe; but if He be not with us, we may watch and labour, even like the builders under Nehemiah, with a weapon in one hand while we toil with the other, and yet it will be all in vain. It is vain to rise up early to a day of toil, vain to go late to a prayerless rest, vain to eat our bitter bread in weariness and pain of heart,—all our work and anxiousness is vain, unless He be with us, and His blessing be upon us and our labour. Why do we take anxious thought for this world's advantages? Our Heavenly Father knoweth we have need of food and raiment; and if we trust in Him, we may rest secure that He Who feeds the birds and clothes the lilies will give what is needful to His elect. He giveth His beloved sleep; He giveth to His beloved in their sleep. To Solomon, whose name was Jedediah, the beloved of the Lord, He gave wisdom in his sleep, more than all the toil of the spirit could have ever gained. He will build for us, if we trust

in Him ; He will watch over us Who sleepeth not ; He will give us each day our daily bread, free from care and free from anxiety ; and each night He will give us sleep sweet and pleasant, as the foretaste of the sleep in Jesus. .

4. Lo, children and the fruit of the womb : are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord.

Heb. For lo, the gift of the Lord are children,
The fruit of the womb are a reward.

5. Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant : even so are the young children.

6. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them : they shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.

Yea, the heritage of sons and of daughters, the joys of home and the delight of children, are also from Him from Whom all good things do come. He gives them Who gives also what is better even than they. Yet are holy and loving children among His choicest earthly blessings : like arrows in the hand of a hero as he goes forth with full quiver to combat with the enemies of his country, for his hearth and home, when 'there is war in the gates,' so are holy children to those whom God has blessed with them, a glory, an ornament, and a defence. Happy is the man who hath the quiver of his home full of them ! And as children of old accompanied their father to the place of justice in the gates of his city, when he was falsely accused by some envious adversary, so

shall they who have brought up their children in the faith and fear of God have boldness in the day of judgment, and shall not be ashamed—as careless parents shall most deeply be—to speak against the accusations of the enemy of souls.

This “pilgrimage song” is “by Solomon.” It bears the marks of his character : compare verses 1—3 with Prov. x. 22, and again with 1 Kings iii. 5—14. This Psalm, which speaks of building the Lord’s house, would also apply to the building of the second temple by Zerubbabel. Watchmen are still employed in the East, as in verse 3, to cry in the night, to shew their vigilance. Their cry is generally a pious sentiment. A modern traveller mentions that he was peculiarly struck with the cry of the watchman in his quarter of Cairo : “I proclaim the glory of the living King Who sleepeth not, nor dieth.” In verse 6 it is doubtful whether “speaking with enemies in the gate” should be understood of meeting them in battle at the gate of the city, or meeting them in the court of justice, which was usually held there, (Deut. xxv. 7). The Chaldee interpreters give the latter meaning, but the context favours the former. This Psalm is appointed to be used in the Office for the Churching of Women. It is supposed by Bp. Horsley to have been used in the temple-service on parents presenting their first-born in the temple (Exod. xxii. 29).

FOR THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY MATRIMONY.

PSALM CXXVIII. *Beati omnes.*

1. BLESSED are all they that fear the Lord : and walk in His ways.

2. For thou shalt eat the labours of thine hands : O well is thee, and happy shalt thou be.

The blessedness given by the world is but a poor and fragile thing, possessed by few, hard to gain, easy to lose. But the blessedness given by God is different quite;—all may gain it who fear Him, and

live in His laws. His blessedness is lasting, true, perfect, given alike to the poor and to the rich,—even the portion of contentment and happiness here, and perfect joy in that land of the redeemed where ‘their works do follow them.’ All who fear God and walk in His way—and none can be said to fear Him who walk not in His way—shall see their efforts to do good blest with success, shall find their work prosper, and shall in this be like their Lord, Who ‘saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied.’

3. Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine : upon the walls of thine house.

4. Thy children like the olive-branches : round about thy table.

Such an one will be blessed especially of God in that pure and holy love, in which ‘a man leaves his father and his mother, is joined unto his wife, and they two become one flesh,’ and which ‘signifies the mystical union which is between Christ and His Church.’ To him his wife will be like the vine on the walls of his house, a joy to his eyes, and an ever-present source of refreshment and of comfort; and in her love he will find a shelter and a refuge in the heat and weariness of life; and his children round his table will be like branches of the olive-tree, glad and flourishing pledges of peace and love, and of the plenteous fruit of good works in old age.

5. Lo, thus shall the man be blessed : that feareth the Lord.

6. The Lord from out of Sion shall so bless

thee : that thou shalt see Jerusalem in prosperity all thy life long.

7. Yea, that thou shalt see thy children's children : and peace upon Israel.

Yea, thus shall 'the Lord pour the riches of His grace' and of His goodness upon him that feareth Him. The Lord shall from the treasury of grace in His Church dispense unending blessings upon His faithful servants; and in the prosperity of the Church shall make them prosperous. For the well-being of the Church is the well-being of each single soul, and the well-being of each single soul is the well-being of the Church. So shall the servants of God live on in holiness and peace all their lives long, and, like Joseph, shall see their children's children brought up at their knees in God's faith and fear. Thus shall there come the peace of God upon the Israel of God, and upon all His elect for ever.

A commentary upon this "pilgrim-song," in its application to Israel, will be found in Zech. viii. It is a Psalm of blessing, and is therefore fitly used in the Office for the celebration of Holy Matrimony. Bp. Horsley considers it to have been used in the temple on the householder presenting his first-fruits or his tithes. Verses 3, 4, may be referred to the Church, and to her children at the Lord's Table. With verse 7 compare Gen. l. 23.

PSALM CXXIX. *Sæpe expugnauerunt.*

1. MANY a time have they fought against me from my youth up : may Israel now say.

2. Yea, many a time have they vexed me from my youth up : but they have not prevailed against me.

From the youth of Israel in Egypt to their age in the captivity of Babylon, they had suffered trouble, and vexation, and tyranny; yet, because God was with them and on their side, in spite of their own sins, they were not utterly oppressed and destroyed. So with the true Israel of those who confess His Name; they are fought against and persecuted, but they are not conquered. Rather are they conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Him Who loveth them.

3. The plowers plowed upon my back : and made long furrows.

LXX. They hammered upon my back,
And prolonged their ungodliness.

How should the disciples escape, when the Lord was bound and beaten? 'Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him;' the Roman executioners ploughed upon His sacred back, as He stood silent and weary at the pillar, and made long their furrows with their cruel rods. He was scourged that we might escape the doom of many stripes, for 'with His stripes we are healed.'

4. But the righteous Lord : hath hewn the snares of the ungodly in pieces.

LXX. The righteous Lord hath cut their necks.

But the God Whose name is Righteous delivers His people at last; He breaks the snares and cuts the bonds by which His people were caught and held, and so He sets them free.

5. Let them be confounded and turned backward : as many as have evil will at Sion.

6. Let them be even as the grass growing upon the house-tops : which withereth afore it be plucked up ;

7. Whereof the mower filleth not his hand : neither he that bindeth up the sheaves his bosom.

8. So that they who go by say not so much as, The Lord prosper you : we wish you good luck in the Name of the Lord.

The mischief that the cruel and wicked have done to the faithful shall return with far deeper bitterness upon themselves. Their plans shall be brought to confusion ; their progress shall be downward and backward. They shall become fruitless and withered, like the grass growing upon the flat house-roof under the southern sky, which springs up only to die. It withers and perishes before one can pluck it up ; sapless and tasteless, it is of no value as hay to the mower ; it cannot even be twisted as bands to be used in binding up the sheaves. It gives occasion for none of the joy of harvest, nor for the mutual salutations and blessings between those who are reaping in the fields and the passers-by who greet them at their work. Even so shall they that have evil will at the Church of God 'fade away in their ways.'

It is difficult to say whether this Psalm belongs to the time of the captivity, or to an earlier period. Verse 3 is generally taken by the

Fathers as a prophecy of our Lord's being scourged, (St. John xix. 1). It may illustrate verse 6, to remark that the roofs of houses in the East are flat, and often made of clay beaten hard, on which grass might spring up, but would soon become too dry and brittle to be of any value either for fodder or hay-bands. (Compare St. Matt. xiii. 5, 6.) With verse 8 compare Ruth ii. 4. The expression of our translation, "We wish you good luck," is still commonly used as a valediction in some of the north-western counties of England.

FOR ASH-WEDNESDAY, BEING THE SIXTH
PENITENTIAL PSALM.

PSALM CXXX. *De profundis.*

1. Out of the deep have I called unto Thee,
O Lord : Lord, hear my voice.

2. O let Thine ears consider well : the voice
of my complaint.

Not merely from the mouth, but from the very depths of the soul, do the righteous cry to God in their trouble. Out of the deepest do we cry loudest unto the Highest. Like Jonah from the bottom of the sea, like the Redeemer from the floods of death, they are ever heard who cry from the deep of contrition and the overwhelmings of repenting shame and sorrow. His ear is ever open to the prayer that comes up from the depths of a troubled spirit.

3. If Thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark
what is done amiss : O Lord, who may abide
it ?

4. For there is mercy with Thee : therefore
shalt Thou be feared.

If God should judge us narrowly and strictly,

being extreme in marking all our shortcomings and transgressions, who of all the sons of Adam could stand before Him? He would be indeed to be dreaded with a deep and terrible fear! But He is most merciful; He judges rather as a Father than a Judge: He hath loved us, and given His Son to be the propitiation for our sins; therefore do His mercy and His love make us fear to offend Him still more as a merciful Father than as an extreme Judge. Perfect love casteth out terror; but love only heightens and purifies the fear that is holy and divine. It is because our God is merciful to us, that we should really fear and reverence Him.

5. I look for the Lord; my soul doth wait for Him: in His word is my trust.

6. My soul fleeth unto the Lord: before the morning watch, I say, before the morning watch.

LXX. From the morning watch until night,
Let Israel hope in the Lord.

7. O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy: and with Him is plentiful redemption.

8. And He shall redeem Israel: from all His sins.

So amid all the darkness of our own waywardness and evil, we look out waiting for the mercy of our Lord, like a watchman impatiently watching and longing for the morning, after a night of anxious-

ness. Let us wait for Him from the morning of our birth until the night of death, and still watch through the night of death, unto the morning watch of the everlasting day. Patience is the perfection of faith; we can wait, because we know that with Him is mercy. He knows the time, and if we wait long enough we shall most surely find redemption from Him,—redemption not only from the guilt of sins that are past, but from the power of those that may come upon us. In our patience we possess our souls; if we wait and watch, we at length shall see ‘the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world’—if we seek we shall find Him ‘Whose name should be called Jesus, for that He should save His people from their sins.’

This “pilgrim-song” is evidently a Psalm of the captivity, and was used after the return to put the Israelites in mind of their trouble and punishment, and that patient faith which at length brought them out of their distress. Bp. Horsley thinks it was used on bringing a sin-offering. With verses 7, 8, compare St. Luke ii. 38; Rom. xi. Rabbi Kimchi says that “this last verse was added to the Psalm that Israel might never despair of redemption on account of iniquities, however great the number of them might be. Their God,” he says, “will pardon these, and will give them a new heart, and then a full redemption both of body and soul will follow.” This is the sixth penitential Psalm, and it is appointed for Ash-Wednesday.

PSALM CXXXI. *Domine, non est.*

1. LORD, I am not high-minded : I have no proud looks.

2. I do not exercise myself in great matters : which are too high for me.

They that would be Christ’s will ever seek for the

grace of humility. They will quench within themselves the pride of the heart and the pride of the eye. They will be humble, and will seem humble, who follow Him 'Who humbled Himself even unto death.' They will not strive for honours, or riches, or power, knowing how dangerous these are to the soul; still less will they doubt, or reason, or question, concerning those great matters of faith which God has revealed concerning Himself, but which are too high for us to understand or search into—which are too high even for the angels.

3. But I refrain my soul, and keep it low, like as a child that is weaned from his mother : yea, my soul is even as a weaned child.

LXX. If I was not humble-minded,

But exalted my soul :

As unto a child weaned from his mother,

Thus shalt Thou reward unto my soul.

As David, though anointed to the kingdom, returned back to the care of his father's sheep in the wilderness, in humility and meekness of heart; as the Lord of David took upon Him the form of a servant, and abhorred not the Virgin's womb, but came into this world as a little Child, gentle, mild, and tender, to be borne upon his mother's bosom, and to receive soothing and comfort as a weaned child; even so must we, baptized to be children of God, bear to be weaned from the delights and the enjoyments of earth; even so must we look not to ourselves, but to our Father Who gives us each day our daily bread; and think ever on the words and

ways of Him Who 'called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of the Apostles, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven.'

4. O Israel, trust in the Lord : from this time forth for evermore.

Therefore the Israel of God will trust in their God, and not in themselves. They will fulfil the precept, 'All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.'

This Psalm, which is one of "the Pilgrimage songs," was written, as the title shews, by David, probably in his youth, when he had just left the care of his father's sheep, and had come to the court of Saul. Some, however, assign it to the time of the revolt of Absalom, and of the reproaches of Shimei. With the whole of this Psalm compare St. Matt. xviii. 1—10, and 1 St. Peter v. 5, 6.

Morning Prayer.

FOR CHRISTMAS-DAY.

PSALM cxxxii. *Memento, Domine.*

1. LORD, remember David : and all his trouble ;

Heb. Lord, remember unto David all his trouble.

LXX. Lord, remember David and all his meekness.

2. How he sware unto the Lord : and vowed a vow unto the Almighty God of Jacob ;

3. I will not come within the tabernacle of mine house : nor climb up into my bed ;

4. I will not suffer mine eyes to sleep, nor mine eyelids to slumber : neither the temples of my head to take any rest ;

5. Until I find out a place for the temple of the Lord : an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.

‘David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent.’ Nor was he then satisfied with what he had done. It troubled his meek and loving spirit that he should dwell in ease and splendour, while the Ark of God was left unreverenced and in neglect. ‘It came to pass as David sat in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars, but the Ark of the covenant of the Lord remaineth under curtains.’ Therefore did he determine to find a place where the Ark, the visible token of God’s presence with His people, might dwell in beauty and glory. He solemnly engaged with himself, and with God, that he would take no enjoyment of the house he had built, that he would not rest quietly, nor cease from his searching, until he had found a place for the temple of the Lord. And he kept his vow, for it was not until the Ark had been brought in triumph to Mount Sion, that ‘David returned to bless his house, or to dwell in it.

How much more should we take no rest until we have made ready within us a habitation for the Saviour, a place where the Son of Man may lay His head !

6. Lo, we heard of the same at Ephrata : and found it in the wood.

David, and his father, and his brethren, while they dwelt at Bethlehem Ephratah, had heard of the Ark as being in the tabernacle at Shiloh in the tribe of Ephraim, but when the time came for Israel and their king to seek for it again, they found it not at Shiloh, but in the forest near Baalah of Judah, which is called Kirjath-jearim, the city of the wood ; and from thence they brought it to Sion, its new abiding-place, from whence it was no more to remove. Even so has the Church heard the glad tidings of the true Ark, the Incarnate Saviour, at Bethlehem, with the shepherds, on Christmas-day, and has found Him on Good-Friday nailed to the wood of the bitter tree ; but now knows Him to be abiding in the Jerusalem above, on the throne of eternal glory.

7. We will go into His tabernacle : and fall low on our knees before His footstool.

LXX. We will worship in the place where His feet have stood.

As the Church worshipped of old in Sion, in the tabernacle and before the Ark, so does the Church worship now at the footstool of God, even that Manhood which He has taken into eternal union with

Himself. He has made our nature holy, that we should henceforth worship the Man Christ Jesus, Who is also the eternal God; and 'that at His Name of Jesus every knee should bow.' For we bow not at His Name of the Word, which is His Name of Godhead, but we bow at His Name of JESUS, which is the Name of His Manhood.

8. Arise, O Lord, into Thy resting-place : Thou, and the ark of Thy strength.

9. Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness : and let Thy saints sing with joyfulness.

10. For Thy servant David's sake : turn not away the presence of Thine Anointed.

Thus did Solomon pray when the temple of God was dedicated,—'Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into Thy resting-place, Thou and the ark of Thy strength: let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness. O Lord God, turn not away the face of Thine anointed: remember the mercies of David Thy servant.' And if Solomon could plead thus in the temple of old for the sake of David, surely the Church, praying now, when the face of the Anointed has been turned to her in the fulness of grace and truth, may cry daily with prevailing intercession, 'Endue Thy ministers with righteousness. And make Thy chosen people joyful,' for the sake of Thy Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

11. The Lord hath made a faithful oath unto David : and He shall not shrink from it ;

12. Of the fruit of thy body : shall I set upon thy seat.

13. If thy children will keep My covenant, and My testimonies that I shall learn them : their children also shall sit upon thy seat for evermore.

The Patriarch David, 'being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne ; He seeing this before,' set forth his firm belief in the word of God ; and looking onward through many generations of his children, he saw in the Spirit that King Who was to reign for ever, at once his Son and his Lord, his Saviour and his Judge.

14. For the Lord hath chosen Sion to be an habitation for Himself : He hath longed for her.

15. This shall be My rest for ever : here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.

16. I will bless her victuals with increase : and will satisfy her poor with bread.

LXX. Blessing, I will bless her widows.

17. I will deck her priests with health : and her saints shall rejoice and sing.

This King hath chosen Sion, the Church on earth,

to be His habitation and His rest. He hath loved her in the past, and will love her for all time to come. He will be with her always, even to the end of the world. He hath chosen her for His rest: for God rests when He makes us rest; and then only we rest perfectly, and He in us, when we cease from our journey on earth to repose in the high city of our eternal rest. And His presence is an earnest of all good; by it He giveth meat to the hungry, and comfort to the poor, even the Bread of life to the believing and repenting soul; by it He Himself is the sanctification of His priests, and His righteousness and salvation is their most glorious vesture; and by His presence He maketh His elect ever glad, filling their hearts with joy and their mouths with songs. So doth He fulfil His Church's daily prayer, giving both to her priests and to her children more of holiness and more of joy than they can ask or think, by giving to them Himself, the Giver of salvation.

18. There shall I make the horn of David to flourish : I have ordained a lantern for Mine Anointed.

19. As for his enemies, I shall clothe them with shame : but upon himself shall his crown flourish.

There in the true Church shall the horn of David—the source of David's strength, and the glory of David's might—even the Messiah, the Prince, arise and reign and flourish for ever; and all the powers and the kingdoms of the world shall be cast down

before Him. There shall God kindle the Light of Israel, 'the Light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of His people;' ordaining Him to arise and shine, Who is the true Light, 'the Light of Light,' which the darkness of evil cannot quench nor comprehend. In His light His enemies shall be ashamed. He shall clothe His foes with shame, even as He clothes His priests with righteousness: for He shall judge in perfect justice, as He shall rule with perfect power; and His crown, which once was sharp with thorns, shall beam with mercy and truth, dimless, measureless, endless.

This Pilgrim Psalm was probably written by Solomon at the placing the ark in the temple; and verses 8, 9, 10, we know, formed the conclusion of his prayer on that occasion, (2 Chron. vi. 41, 42). Verse 9 is also used in the Church's daily service. In verse 6 there is some difficulty, as some commentators understand Ephratah to be used for Ephraim, and would translate, "We used to hear of the ark in Ephraim," i. e. at Shiloh; but the meaning seems to be that Jesse and his family, the dwellers at Bethlehem Ephratah, (Gen. xxxv. 19,) had traditionally heard of the ark as being at Shiloh, but that on inquiry they had found it where it had been placed after it had returned from the Philistines, in the house of Abinadab, in Gibeah, near Kirjath-jearim, (1 Sam. vii. 1, 2,) "the city of forests," otherwise called Baalah of Judah, (Josh. x. 9,) from which David and all the people brought it up, and left it, on the death of Uzzah, at the house of Obed-Edom, the Levite of Gath-Rimmon, (2 Sam. vi. 1—11). Compare with this verse St. Luke ii.; and with verses 11, 12, compare Acts ii. 30; 2 Sam. vii. 12, and Psalm lxxx. 9. On verse 18, Rabbi Kimchi remarks, "The horn of David is the Messiah." The word "horn" occurs very often in the Psalms and the other Scriptures, as the emblem of strength and power. It is likely that some ornament in the shape of a horn was used as an ensign of dignity. The women among the Maronites, who dwell near Lebanon, still wear a silver horn as an ornament; and it is used, too, by warriors and commanders in Abyssinia. But perhaps a clearer illustration of the use of the horn as an ensign of dignity, is found in ancient writers, who tell us that

the great king of Persia alone of all the Persians wore the peak of his turban upright, while all his subjects wore theirs bent backward. The coins of Alexander the Great represent him with horns. The Sultan of Turkey wears a similar ensign of power in an upright plume, which may possibly be a relic of the ancient use of the horn in the turban or helmet. Compare Daniel vii.

PSALM CXXXIII. *Ecce, quam bonum.*

1. BEHOLD, how good and joyful a thing it is : brethren, to dwell together in unity !

How good and excellent a thing is unity ! It was the one last and great desire of the Lord of life for us, that we might be one ; even as the Father was in the Son, and the Son in the Father, that we also might be one in the Father and the Son. How glad and joyful a thing is charity ! It is greater than faith, or than hope—it ‘is the very bond of peace, and of all virtues.’ Unity and brotherly love among the children of Christ’s Church here, are benefits and graces which are indeed heavenly, and come from heaven. There are feelings that are good, but are not joyful, and feelings that are joyful, but that are not good, but unity and brotherly love fill the soul at once with goodness and with joy.

2. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down unto the beard : even unto Aaron’s beard, and went down to the skirts of his clothing.

Like that precious oil, rich with spices, which Moses poured upon the head of Aaron when he was consecrated to be high-priest, and which flowed down his beard, and perfumed at once and hallowed all his

garments, even to the border of his ephod; so is that unction of love which cometh from the Holy One, which was poured without measure upon our great High-Priest at His baptism, and ‘anointed Him for His burial,’ and has descended upon all who are brought into communion with Him, and who become part of that mysterious and seamless robe which is His Church,—making them holy as He is holy, and loving as He is loving.

3. Like as the dew of Hermon : which fell upon the hill of Sion.

Heb. Like as the dew of Hermon,

And as that which descended upon the hill of Sion.

4. For there the Lord promised His blessing : and life for evermore.

Yea, love comes from heaven and enriches and gladdens earth,—free, pure, plenteous, like the dew which fell upon the tops of Hermon, beyond the streams of Jordan in the far-off east, and like that which fell upon the hallowed hill of Sion in the south. It cheers all the people of God, far and wide, in all the borders of His Church. The plenteous dew of its blessing falls richly upon all, from their baptism in the spiritual Jordan beneath the height of Hermon, even to their coming to the spiritual Sion, the city of the living God, and to the full communion of the saints. There hath God promised to give the fullness of His blessing—everlasting life, everlasting unity, everlasting love. Then will He Himself be all in all.

This “Song of Degrees” was perhaps written when all the tribes of

Israel, including both Ephraim and Judah, were united under the government of David; or it might have been composed with a view to the general assembling of the Israelites together, after the return, in the temple, on the occasion of the feast of the Passover. It celebrates the blessing of unity, which is good as the oil of consecration, and joyful as the plenteous dew. With verse 2 compare Exod. xxx. 22—33, xxxvii. 29; Levit. viii. 12. Of this holy oil, which was compounded of myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, and cassia, with olive-oil, the tradition of the Rabbis says, that enough was made by Moses to anoint all the high-priests up to the time of the captivity, and that then it failed, and no more was made. Therefore the high-priests from the time of Aaron till that time, are called "anointed priests," while those subsequent to the captivity were merely invested in their priestly robes without being anointed. They also relate that this holy oil was poured in great abundance upon the head of the high-priest, but that the other priests were consecrated by their foreheads being merely touched with it. In verse 3, Sion has been considered by some writers to be intended for Sion or Sirion, one of the lower peaks of Mount Hermon, (Deut. iii. 9, iv. 48): thus the dew of Hermon would be the same with that which fell on Sirion, or Shenir. But our Bible version seems to give the best rendering of the meaning of the original.

PSALM CXXXIV. *Ecce nunc.*

1. BEHOLD now, praise the Lord : all ye servants of the Lord ;

2. Ye that by night stand in the house of the Lord : even in the courts of the house of our God.

3. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary : and praise the Lord.

As the worshippers who came up to the yearly feast at the temple, to make their offerings and to pay their vows, when their holy service was done, turned back at evening-tide to return to their own dwellings, leaving the Levites and priests watching

in the holy place, and carrying on still the worship of prayer and praise; even so may the Christian soul, when its own work of intercession and thankfulness is finished, recollect with a glowing spirit how, in the courts of heaven, the angels and the spirits of the just made perfect are still evermore praising the Lord, and how there they neither sleep nor are weary, but rest not day and night in their ceaseless chant of 'Holy, Holy, Holy.' They lift up their hands and their voices before their God in His high eternal sanctuary, and cast their crowns before His throne in infinite adoration. Oh that we, like them, by night and by day, through all our earthly pilgrimage of life and death, might serve Him, and never weary of our service!

4. The Lord that made heaven and earth : give thee blessing out of Sion.

Yet we join with them in their service. Our faint and weak song of praise is lengthened out by their unearthly melody; and in the mystery of the communion of saints, we, 'with angels and arch-angels, and all the company of heaven,' praise the Lord of glory; and though still pilgrims of the Church below, we share with the Church above, up to which our journeyings are tending, the blessing of Him Who is the Maker and Father of all.

This Psalm, which appears to be an evening hymn which was sung by the priests and Levites who kept watch within the temple at night, and the people who had ended their devotions, very fitly closes the series of "Pilgrim-songs." This collection of fifteen Psalms which forms the "Pilgrim-book," was probably finally arranged at the time

when the building of the second temple was for a time interrupted, (Ezra iv.) They therefore appear to come properly, in order of time, immediately after the 119th Psalm, supposing it to have been written by Ezra.

PSALM CXXXV. *Laudate Nomen.*

1. O PRAISE the Lord, laud ye the Name of the Lord : praise it, O ye servants of the Lord ;

2. Ye that stand in the house of the Lord : in the courts of the house of our God.

3. O praise the Lord, for the Lord is gracious : O sing praises unto His Name, for it is lovely.

4. For why ? the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto Himself : and Israel for His own possession.

To our God be ascribed unceasingly all blessing and praise, laud and honour, from all whom He hath made, from angels and from men, from priests and from peoples. His service is perfect freedom ; for to be His servant is to be His child. He is the Source of all grace, He is the Author of all beauty. Yet it is not for this that we should praise Him, but because He is love, and hath loved us. He first hath loved and chosen us, therefore do we love Him, and give ourselves unto Him.

5. For I know that the Lord is great : and that our Lord is above all gods.

6. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth : and in the sea, and in all deep places.

7. He bringeth forth the clouds from the ends of the world : and sendeth forth lightnings with the rain, bringing the winds out of His treasures.

He is the Lord of nature, the Cause of causes, the Power of powers. His will is the law of the universe ; His righteous will is the law of heaven, and its joys—of earth, and its feebleness—of the sea, and its mysteries—of the depth of hell, and its pains. He Who sent His ministers to preach His Word in His Church, biddeth the clouds, with their droppings of rain, to cover the sky ; He Who maketh His angels winds, and His messengers like a flame, sendeth forth the lightnings to shine unto the world, and bringeth the winds and the storms from His treasure-house, of which none but He can tell whence they come, or whither they go.

8. He smote the first-born of Egypt : both of man and beast.

9. He hath sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O thou land of Egypt : upon Pharaoh, and all his servants.

10. He smote divers nations : and slew mighty kings ;

11. Sehon king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Basan : and all the kingdoms of Canaan ;

12. And gave their land to be an heritage : even an heritage unto Israel His people.

He is the God of providence, the Ruler of all the doings of men, the Guide of His own people. He punished Egypt of old with pestilence, and death, and mighty plagues, and delivered His chosen; and not only did He deliver them from slavery, but He slew Sihon and Og, the emblems of worldly power, and smote the seven kingdoms of Canaan, the types of the seven deadly sins, and gave their land to Israel for an heritage, even as He has given the world for an heritage unto His Church.

13. Thy Name, O Lord, endureth for ever : so doth Thy memorial, O Lord, from one generation to another.

14. For the Lord will avenge His people : and be gracious unto His servants.

Everlasting is the glory of His Name, and the memory of His love is for eternity ! His power is ever watching over His people, and His grace is upon all those that serve Him !

15. As for the images of the heathen, they are but silver and gold : the work of men's hands.

16. They have mouths, and speak not : eyes have they, but they see not.

17. They have ears, and yet they hear not : neither is there any breath in their mouths.

18. They that make them are like unto them : and so are all they that put their trust in them.

What are the vain things that men trust in, their idols of silver and gold, but profitless delusions, and snares, and sins? 'They cannot deliver, but themselves go into captivity.' Covetousness and idolatry degrade man from his proper rank as a free and upright servant of his real Lord, to be a mere senseless, soulless being, believing in a lie, worshipping a lie, and living in a lie.

19. Praise the Lord, ye house of Israel : praise the Lord, ye house of Aaron.

20. Praise the Lord, ye house of Levi : ye that fear the Lord, praise the Lord.

21. Praised be the Lord out of Sion : Who dwelleth at Jerusalem.

Therefore let us leave the things that perish, and their images and copies, and turn to Him in Whom alone is blessing. Let all join in His all-worthy praise—the house of Israel, and the house of Aaron, and the house of Levi, the people, and the priests, and the deacons of His holy Church—yea, let all that fear Him, and reverence Him, and love Him, in the Sion of the Church below, join to praise Him for evermore Who dwells in the Jerusalem of the Church above. Bless we Him now and ever, if we would be now and ever blessed by Him.

The two first verses of this Psalm are taken from the one which immediately precedes it. Verses 15—18 also are taken from Psalm cxv.; in fact, there is a very strong resemblance and connection between this Psalm and the 115th, and they should be carefully compared together; for this gives thanks and grateful praise where that intercedes and promises. The subduing of Sihon and of Og, and the taking

possession of their kingdoms, as it was the first acquisition of territory gained by the Israelites, so it seems to have made a deep impression upon their memory as a nation. (Numbers xxi. 21—35.) This Psalm was probably chanted by a full chorus of the Priests, Levites, and people at some of the great festivals after the return from the Captivity, perhaps at the Feast of Tabernacles, the joyful celebration of which is recorded in Neh. viii. 13—18.

Ebening Prayer.

PSALM CXXXVI. *Confitemini.*

1. O GIVE thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious : and His mercy endureth for ever.

2. O give thanks unto the God of all gods : for His mercy endureth for ever.

3. O thank the Lord of all lords : for His mercy endureth for ever.

Our God is perfect and eternal goodness, perfect and eternal power, perfect and eternal truth, perfect and eternal wisdom ; but the most glorious and the most wonderful of all His attributes is, that He is perfect and eternal mercy. His mercy never faileth ; of His mercy there is no end : His mercy shines forth for ever upon all His works, both small and great ; His mercy is from eternity unto eternity. He is God of gods, and Lord of lords ; but more than that—He is gracious, and of everlasting mercy !

4. Who only doeth great wonders : for His mercy endureth for ever.

5. Who by His excellent wisdom made the heavens : for His mercy endureth for ever.

6. Who laid out the earth above the waters : for His mercy endureth for ever.

7. Who hath made great lights : for His mercy endureth for ever ;

8. The sun to rule the day : for His mercy endureth for ever ;

9. The moon and the stars to govern the night : for His mercy endureth for ever.

For what were all the marvels of creation which He, with the Only-begotten Son, the Uncreated Wisdom and Eternal Word, and with the Holy Ghost, the Giver of life and light, wrought out when He framed the universe, but distinct evidences and visible signs of His supernal mercy? The created wonders are outward manifestations of the creating glory; the things seen are shadows of the things unseen. He 'by His Spirit hath garnished the heavens,' and by His Spirit hath He given to us the volume of His Scripture; He hath made the earth upon the waters, and hath redeemed the people of the earth by holy baptism; He hath set the sun to rule the day, and hath sent the Sun of righteousness, the Lord of glory, to shine upon us; He hath ordained the moon and the stars to govern the night, and He hath set forth the examples of His saints, and the doctrines of His Church, to guide us in our doubt and ignorance and darkness.

10. Who smote Egypt with their first-born : for His mercy endureth for ever ;

11. And brought out Israel from among them : for His mercy endureth for ever ;

12. With a mighty hand, and stretched out arm : for His mercy endureth for ever.

13. Who divided the Red Sea in two parts : for His mercy endureth for ever ;

14. And made Israel to go through the midst of it : for His mercy endureth for ever.

15. But as for Pharaoh and his host, He overthrew them in the Red Sea : for His mercy endureth for ever.

And in the same mightiness of eternal mercy He delivered the Church of Israel from the power of Pharaoh; and He has ever delivered His universal Church from the captivity of sin,—leading her members through the waters of regeneration, as He led Israel through the Red Sea.

16. Who led His people through the wilderness : for His mercy endureth for ever.

17. Who smote great kings : for His mercy endureth for ever ;

18. Yea, and slew mighty kings : for His mercy endureth for ever ;

19. Sehon king of the Amorites : for His mercy endureth for ever ;

20. And Og the king of Basan : for His mercy endureth for ever ;

21. And gave away their land for an heritage : for His mercy endureth for ever ;

22. Even for an heritage unto Israel His servant ; for His mercy endureth for ever.

And the mercy which He shewed in His education of Israel in the wilderness, in His destroying mighty kings before them, the monarchs of the Amorites and of Basan, still worketh effectually towards His people, — chastening, warning, guiding them, and driving from their souls the mighty powers of the flesh and of the world, and giving ‘all things,’ even Himself, to be an heritage to His saints.

23. Who remembered us when we were in trouble : for His mercy endureth for ever ;

24. And hath delivered us from our enemies : for His mercy endureth for ever.

25. Who giveth food to all flesh : for His mercy endureth for ever.

26. O give thanks unto the God of heaven : for His mercy endureth for ever.

27. O give thanks unto the Lord of lords : for His mercy endureth for ever.

The same everlasting mercy remembers and comforts us in all our troubles, delivers us from all our foes, supplies us in all our wants. As a loving Father, as a patient Saviour, as an ever-present Comforter, the eternal Trinity is eternally manifesting forth eternal mercy. Therefore let all who

have known His mercy give praise and thanks to Him for that mercy, by which, and in which, they are what they are.

This Psalm was probably written at the end of the captivity, to sustain and keep alive trust in the enduring mercy of God among the returning Jews. In the feature of each verse being followed by an assertion of the eternal mercy of God, in words which do not vary, it presents a strong resemblance to the Canticle of the Three Children, the *Benedicite*, which is used in our morning service, and was also written about the time of the captivity. This repetition of one sentence after each verse of a Psalm probably gave rise to the ancient antiphone of the earlier Christian offices, which was originally chanted after each verse, though it afterwards was confined to the conclusion of the Psalm. This Psalm was, it seems likely, chanted by a full choir of Levites, the congregation of worshippers responding or joining in with the last member of each verse.

PSALM CXXXVII. *Super flumina.*

1. By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept : when we remembered thee, O Sion.

Like sinners sorrowing over graces lost, and mercies set at nought, and opportunities gone by for ever, so did the Israelites sit down weeping by the Euphrates or the Tigris, by the Chebar or the Ulai, in the land of their captivity, mourning, and swelling with their tears the waters of the rivers of Babel ; while their thoughts and memories, and the whole love and longing of their souls, went wandering back to Jerusalem, the city of their people, and Sion, the dwelling-place of their God.

2. As for our harps, we hanged them up : upon the trees that are therein.

They sat in silence ; they remembered in silence ;

they wept in silence. They hung their harps upon the trees, like penitents who dare not pray. For seventy years of weary grief they dared not cheer their souls with melody ; but they hanged up their harps upon the willows, while their tears ran down like the waters which flowed beside them—streaming, silent, ceaseless. They seemed away from God, and so seemed to have lost all.

3. For they that led us away captive required of us then a song, and melody, in our heaviness : Sing us one of the songs of Sion.

4. How shall we sing the Lord's song : in a strange land ?

But their Babylonian conquerors, who had heard of their skill in music and in song, asked them—like accusing thoughts, when they mock us with the remembrance of forfeited grace—to repeat for their enjoyment the far-famed melodies of Jerusalem. They bade them in all their heaviness and woe-worn state to ‘Sing them one of the songs of Sion,’ to chant again the holy tenderness of the sons of Korah, the solemn majesty of Asaph, the high-souled faith or the utter penitence of the royal Psalmist of Israel. But how could they? How could they sing with unwavering voice, or with unmoistened eyes, ‘Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks?’—How could they again declare, ‘In Jewry is God known : His Name is great in Israel?’—How could they ask, ‘Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle : or who shall rest upon Thy holy hill?’ with unpierced con-

sciences in that strange land to which their sins had brought them?

5. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem : let my right hand forget her cunning.

6. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth : yea, if I prefer not Jerusalem in my mirth.

They could not—and they durst not—sing the joyful and the loving hymns which had been sung of old in their now ruined sanctuary, either for the curiosity of their enemies and oppressors, or for their own solace and enjoyment. It was better to remember Jerusalem than to enjoy Babylon—better to weep with longing for the hill of Sion, than to be contented or to be merry on the plains of Chaldæa—better to mourn for the softly-flowing brook of Shiloah, than to smile beside the waters of Euphrates. Their memories were all they had ; and if they lost them too,—then it were well that their hands should forget for the time to come, how to call forth music from the harp-strings,—it were well that their tongues should be dumb for ever, be withered and palsied in their mouth. Their one wish and craving, the beginning and the end of all their desire, was to see Jerusalem again ; and that longing they set far above all other enjoying ; and that want they ever felt the first and last in any approach to mirth or gladness. The sound of music and the voice of Psalms brought back clear and plain that one memory of, Jerusalem which had ever added joy to their mirth

and given holiness to their holy songs. Even so is it better to remember heaven than to be surrounded with all earthly pleasure.

7. Remember the children of Edom, O Lord, in the day of Jerusalem : how they said, Down with it, down with it, even to the ground.

Heb. Remember, O Lord, to the sons of Edom the day of Jerusalem.

For the children of Edom, the sons of Esau, who had rejoiced over their brother Israel's ruin and slaughter,—they committed their chastisement to God. They wished not to remember their unkind and cruel triumph, and the evil joy with which they excited the Chaldeans to their work of desolation, and 'rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction;' but they committed the remembrance of it, and the chastisement of it, to the God of heaven. The Edomites had taken a guilty pleasure in malice; and His righteous justice would not overlook them or forget them. Israel had sinned, and his punishment had overtaken him; but Esau had sinned still more, and his punishment, though delayed, was certain still. The prophet of God, who had lamented over Judah, had spoken his Lord's decree when He said 'The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Sion; He will no more carry thee into captivity. But He will visit thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom; He will discover thy sins.' Yea, it is ever far more bearable to be chastened presently for our evil-doings,

than to have resting over us the fearful expectation of a coming and a certain judgment.

8. O daughter of Babylon, wasted with misery : yea, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us.

9. Blessed shall he be that taketh thy children : and throweth them against the stones.

And for Babylon, that city vast and powerful, the emblem of the confusion and the unwieldy strength of earth, as arrayed against the Church of God, there was a righteous doom to be accomplished in the appointed time. She was to be laid waste in her turn. There was one to be raised up, crowned with strength for the work of God, and blessed in doing it, even though it were a work of destruction. Of him, too, had Isaiah the prophet spoken :—‘Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him ; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates ; and the gates shall not be shut. For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name, that thou mayest know that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.’ He requited to Babylon, as she had done to Sion ; conquering, and slaughtering, and leading into captivity the people of ‘the golden city’ of Babel. Cyrus was blessed in that he was raised up to be the punisher of the sinful city ; but he was still more blessed in that he was the instrument of reversing that ruin which Babylon

had wrought. He was again blessed, for that the Lord, the Redeemer, said 'of Cyrus, He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundations shall be laid.' And herein yet again was Cyrus blessed, in that he was a type of that Eternal Shepherd Who performed all the pleasure and the will of God,—of that Saviour Who by His death overthrew the powers of the world, and conquered and slew the lusts of the eye and of the flesh, and the pride of life, the children of that city of confusion;—Who ever dasheth to earth the offspring of the earth, the thoughts, and words, and works of earth;—Who 'mortifies and kills all vices in us,' smiting them to the ground with the stone tables of His holy law, and crushing them upon the blood-stained rocks of Golgotha.

This mournful and passionate song has in the Hebrew no title. In the LXX. it is inscribed, "of Jeremiah, for David," meaning, perhaps, for the family of David. It has many points of likeness to the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and was perhaps written by that prophet, in the early part of the captivity. It is certain that it was written at some time during the captivity at Babylon. The request of the conquerors in verse 3 did not proceed from a spirit of insult, but rather of curiosity, and shews how widely extended, even among heathen nations, was the fame of the beauty of the music and of the psalmody of the temple-service in Jerusalem. With verse 7 compare especially Obadiah 10—14, and Lamentations iv. 21, 22; and with verses 8, 9 compare, as far as regards Cyrus, Isaiah xlv. 24—28, xlv. 1—4, 13, xlv. 11; and as regards Babylon, and her symbolic meaning, compare large portions of Isaiah and the other prophets, and the Book of Revelations. The prophecy of verse 9 was fulfilled, for Dean Prideaux says that during the siege of Babylon by Cyrus, "The Babylonians, to make their provisions last the longer, agreed to cut off all unnecessary mouths among them, and therefore, drawing together all

the women and children, they strangled them all." See his "Connection," book iii.

PSALM cxxxviii. *Confitebor Tibi.*

1. I WILL give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart : even before the gods will I sing praise unto Thee.

LXX. And before the angels will I sing unto Thee ;
For Thou hast heard all the words of my mouth.

2. I will worship toward Thy holy temple, and praise Thy Name, because of Thy loving-kindness and truth : for Thou hast magnified Thy Name, and Thy Word, above all things.

3. When I called upon Thee, Thou heardest me : and enduedst my soul with much strength.

The gratitude of the whole and undivided heart, unshared among other objects of fear or liking, is the offering which the believer will desire to bring unto his God. He will shun spending upon any creature, even upon angels, the love which of right is due to his all-loving Father. He will, like David, or like Daniel worshipping toward the temple at Jerusalem, worship with all his soul and spirit turned towards heaven ; praising Him Whose temple is there, for all His goodness and loving-kindness, ' but above all, for His inestimable love in the redemption of the world by the Lord Jesus Christ ;' by which the Word being made flesh, raised our nature to be the highest above all things that are made, whether in earth or heaven. Yes, and he will return thanks, too, ' for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory ;' by which

in His Sacraments and Word our God quickens, comforts, strengthens, our weak and fainting souls, filling them to the full with faith, and hope, and love.

4. All the kings of the earth shall praise Thee, O Lord : for they have heard the words of Thy mouth.

5. Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord : that great is the glory of the Lord.

6. For though the Lord be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly : as for the proud, He beholdeth them afar off.

In this offering up of the whole heart in gratitude, we shall not be alone. All the nations of the world and their rulers shall be brought to join in it too ; for they shall all at length hear His solemn proclamation,—‘ Yet have I set My king upon My holy hill of Sion,’ and shall all at length confess the real righteousness and the almightiness of Him Whose name is Love. They shall find that ‘ all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth’ to them that are His ; and, walking in those ways of mercy and truth, they shall sing of Him Whose ways they are, and of His glory—that glory which He sought not for Himself, but which rested upon Him the more mightily for that He sought it not. They shall sing of Him Who was the Highest and yet became the Lowest, stooping from the height of eternity down to our fallen nature, even to the cradle of Bethlehem, and so by His very lowliness is set far above and

away from the proud and the despisers. For God and pride cannot dwell together, either in the same heaven above, or in the same heart on earth. Pride once fallen from heaven ascends no more to the heaven from which it fell.

7. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, yet shalt Thou refresh me : Thou shalt stretch forth Thy hand upon the furiousness of mine enemies, and Thy right hand shall save me.

8. The Lord shall make good His loving-kindness toward me : yea, Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever ; despise not then the works of Thine own hands.

In trouble He will ever help His own ; in weariness He will refresh them. He has stretched forth His hand upon the Cross, and has stilled the furiousness of our ghostly foes, and has put away our guilt ; and His right hand will still be ever stretched forth to find and save His people, until at last He shall set them on His right hand for ever in His kingdom of salvation. For He will keep all His promises ; He will lose not one of His sheep ; He will give the fulness of the grace of perseverance unto them that ask it from His infinite mercy. His creating hands formed our souls in the beginning ; His nail-pierced hands redeemed them on Calvary ; His glorified hands will hold our souls fast and not let them go for ever. Unto His hands let us commend our spirits, sure that even though the works of our

hands have made void the works of His hands, yet that His hands will again make perfect all that our hands have unmade.

This Psalm is evidently what the title declares it to be, "a Psalm of David." To this the LXX. add the names of "Haggai and Zechariah;" and it is likely that it was preserved and used by them at the building of the second temple, and the reciting it at that time must have brought much consolation to the race of David and the nation of Judah. The Psalm itself was probably composed by David on the promise being made to him which is recorded in 2 Sam. vii. This commences a series of eight Psalms, written by David, which were added as supplementary to the collections of the former books.

Morning Prayer.

PSALM CXXXIX. *Domine, probasti.*

1. O LORD, Thou hast searched me out, and known me : Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine up-rising ; Thou understandest my thoughts long before.

2. Thou art about my path, and about my bed : and spiest out all my ways.

3. For lo, there is not a word in my tongue : but Thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether.

4. Thou hast fashioned me behind and before : and laid Thine hand upon me.

LXX. Behold, Lord, Thou knowest all things,
The last things and those of ancient days.

Our eternal Father knoweth us. He made us, and how should He not know the work of His own hands? His eye of wisdom ever and utterly sees us; His eye of love ever and utterly watches us.

His presence is closer round us than the air we breathe ; His presence is more within us than even the life by which we live. ' He is not far from every one of us : for in Him we live, and move, and have our being.' Our path by day, our bed by night, the words of our tongue, the thoughts of our spirit, are all open and plain before Him Who said in the beginning, ' Let us make man,' and Who blessed him when He had made him.

5. Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me : I cannot attain unto it.

How awful is it for a frail, sinning, polluted thing like man to know and to feel that he is ever near to so pure, and wise, and holy a Lord and God. We cannot attain even to a conception of the wisdom of our God. How can we abide the keenness of His knowledge and the purity and righteousness of His judgments ? We fall back abashed ; we long to escape from His presence, like Jonah unto Tarshish ; we shrink from the thought of His unceasing nearness, which flesh and blood cannot bear. For in every world, in every Church, in every heart, Christ is and hath been either crucified or glorified.

6. Whither shall I go then from Thy Spirit : or whither shall I go then from Thy presence ?

7. If I climb up into heaven, Thou art there : if I go down to hell, Thou art there also.

8. If I take the wings of the morning : and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea ;

9. Even there also shall Thy hand lead me : and Thy right hand shall hold me.

10. If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me : then shall my night be turned to day.

11. Yea, the darkness is no darkness with Thee, but the night is as clear as the day : the darkness and light to Thee are both alike.

But whither can man go where the grace of the Holy Spirit cannot reach him?—whither can he go where the Son of God has not been before him? If he ascend to heaven, Christ the Lord is reigning there in the fulness of all power over earth and heaven ; if he go down into the grave, the Saviour hath been there before him ; and in that deeper pit of pain and woe eternal His judgment is supreme, though His mercy stops short before its fearful mouth. If man could take wings swifter than the beams of morning light, and could flee unto that eastward Paradise from which once Adam fell, there have the footsteps of the Redeemer past, Who entered there with the repentant thief ; and if he should go beyond the ocean and its depths, into the unseen and hidden world of spirits, even there too hath Christ descended. Where man hath been or can go, there hath God gone as man,—leading us with His guiding hand, if we will but follow Him,—holding fast our souls with His right hand, that whether in life or death, in Paradise or in the unseen world, His hand may save us which was stretched out for us. No

darkness, not even the darkness of sin, can hide us from Him Who sought us through the darkness from the sixth hour to the ninth on Calvary. That darkness is no darkness with Him Who rose from the grave early, while it was yet dark, for our justification, and filled the whole earth with the bright light of the day of His resurrection. The darkness and the light are to Him both alike, for His love shines alike in both, and His grace works alike in both. Seek we not how to escape from Him, but how to be ever with Him, that in all and through all we lose not the leading of His loving hand.

12 For my reins are Thine : Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

13. I will give thanks unto Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made : marvellous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.

14. My bones are not hid from Thee : though I be made secretly, and fashioned beneath in the earth.

15. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect : and in Thy book were all my members written ;

16. Which day by day were fashioned : when as yet there was none of them.

For we are His indeed ; our innermost impulses and wishes belong to Him. He made us, and brought us into life. He caused us to be born

again in the laver of regeneration. All that strange and wondrous assemblage of hopes, and fears, and desires, and affections, and memories, and aspirings, and regrets, which we call ourselves,—so strangely fearful in their natural state, so strangely wonderful when sanctified by grace,—are indeed the work of His hands, no less than our fleshly body which He made from the dust of earth. He hath framed us, soul and body. Our bones so strong and aptly set, our nerves and muscles woven together so artfully and well,—the gradual increase day by day of our frame,—the full number and order of the members which make up our body,—all are from Him, and He is the Cause of all. He is the Creator and the Cause, Who became even as one of the created, Who Himself was conceived and born, and grew up to the stature of a man, that into His body, so fearfully and wonderfully made, He might join together all His members, even those whose names are written in the book of Life.

17. How dear are Thy counsels unto me, O God : O how great is the sum of them !

18. If I tell them, they are more in number than the sand : when I wake up I am present with Thee.

How great, how wonderful are the dealings of God with man both in creation and in redemption ! ‘ Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out ! ’ All

His designs are mercy, all His doings are love Who can number His works of love toward one of His elect? How immense, then, is the sum of all His acts of mercy to all the number of His redeemed! Neither man nor angel can reach their full account, for they are infinite, as His love is infinite. This only do we know, that, as the completion and the end of them all, He will at last raise us up again, soul and body, from the sleep of death, clothed with incorruption, and girded with immortality, and will set us in His presence in the fulness of exceeding joy, to be for ever with our Lord.

19. Wilt Thou not slay the wicked, O God : depart from me, ye blood-thirsty men.

20. For they speak unrighteously against Thee : and Thine enemies take Thy Name in vain.

21. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee : and am not I grieved with those that rise up against Thee?

22. Yea, I hate them right sore : even as though they were mine enemies.

This full conviction of the presence of God ever close to us will keep us clear from the assaults of sin. Knowing that our God hates the wickedness of the wicked, we shall not dare to come near to them while He is so near to us. We shall hate the sin which enslaves those that hate Him ; we shall feel sin to be our one, own, real, personal foe, be-

cause it is our Lord's ; and we shall fight against it in ourselves and in others by prayer and faith, until, if it may be, we subdue it both in ourselves and them.

23. Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart : prove me, and examine my thoughts.

24. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me : and lead me in the way everlasting.

Therefore let us give up ourselves to Him ever more and more. He searcheth us,—let us pray to Him to search us ; He understandeth our thoughts, let us ask Him to examine and to purge them. He is about our path and spies our way ;—what can we desire but that He will take from us the way of wickedness, if there be any such within us ? His hand is leading us,—cry we to Him with all our strength that He will lead us in the way everlasting, even in Himself unto Himself.

This Psalm was undoubtedly written, as the title declares, “by David, for the chief Musician,” or the leader of the choir. These words the LXX. translate here, as elsewhere, “for the end,” which St. Augustine always interprets of “Christ, the end of the Law.” It is a sublime and hallowing meditation upon the omniscience and omnipresence of Almighty God, and was well adapted to instruct and comfort the exiles in Babylon during their separation from the sanctuary at Jerusalem. There is nothing to fix the time of David's life to which its composition should be assigned, but it might have been written during the plottings of Absalom.

PSALM cxi. *Eripe me, Domine.*

1. DELIVER me, O Lord, from the evil man : and preserve me from the wicked man.

2. Who imagine mischief in their hearts : and stir up strife all the day long.

3. They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent : adder's poison is under their lips.

4. Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the ungodly : preserve me from the wicked men, who are purposed to overthrow my goings.

5. The proud have laid a snare for me, and spread a net abroad with cords : yea, and set traps in my way.

As David prayed for deliverance from the mischief and calumny of the Ziphites, of Doeg, and of Saul, so does the child of Christ's holy Church ever pray for deliverance from the power of his ghostly enemy, and the wicked who are the instruments of his malice. Iniquity and strife are ever the contrivance and the object of the ungodly and the hypocrites, who are in this the children of the great dragon, and do the lusts of their father. The ungodly laid a snare for the Truth Himself, 'that they might entangle Him in His talk;' and He 'perceived their wickedness' and craft, and broke through their trap, condemning them with that word which cannot lie, — 'Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?' In the same spirit of truth and of holy indignation must His disciple seek to escape both their example and their guile.

6. I said unto the Lord, Thou art my God : hear the voice of my prayers, O Lord.

7. O Lord God, Thou strength of my health :
Thou hast covered my head in the day of
battle.

This the soldier of Christ can ever do by prayer,
—‘Thou art my God’ is the sword of the Spirit
with which he can resist and discomfit the Evil one
and all his instruments. He will ever conquer in
that warfare, even as his Lord conquered, if he will
‘put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an
helmet the hope of salvation.’ The Lord Himself is
the salvation of His people, and if we have hope in
Him, He will cover us, like a mighty champion
spreading his shield over a fallen soldier, from all as-
saults of the enemy in the hour of temptation and
in the day of trouble.

8. Let not the ungodly have his desire, O
Lord : let not his mischievous imagination
prosper, lest they be too proud.

9. Let the mischief of their own lips fall
upon the head of them : that compass me
about.

10. Let hot burning coals fall upon them :
let them be cast into the fire, and into the pit,
that they never rise up again.

11. A man full of words shall not prosper
upon the earth : evil shall hunt the wicked
person to overthrow him.

God will take care that the wicked and the de-
ceitful do not prosper ; He will interfere to prevent

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their becoming proud in their own craft and sinfulness. He will judge them here and hereafter out of their own mouths, and will condemn them by their own words. He will appoint them their portion; and when 'the devil that deceived them is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, to be tormented day and night for ever and ever,' they also 'shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.' Hypocrisy, and falsehood, and lying, the abusings of the gift of speech to wicked ends, shall not prosper even in this life; punishment shall hunt the hypocrite even here, like the hunter tracks out a beast until he overtakes it: he may 'be sure that his sin shall find him out' in this life; and in the life to come he shall meet with the fulness of the Saviour's 'Woe unto you.'

12. Sure I am that the Lord will avenge the poor : and maintain the cause of the helpless.

13. The righteous also shall give thanks unto Thy Name : and the just shall continue in Thy sight.

Faith waits until the righteousness of God is justified, for she can realize that which is not seen. The poor and the helpless have Him for their comfort and their aid, Who once Himself was even as they are; and when He thinks it time, then the faithful and obedient shall be filled with gratefulness for ever, and the right-doers, who have persevered

in this life, shall be 'caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord.' Wherefore, in trial, and calumny, and oppression, let us comfort one another with these words.

This also is "a Psalm of David, for the Chief Musician." It clearly belongs to that period of his life when he was suffering from his enemies, from the Ziphim or from Doeg; and it strongly resembles those prayers which were written under the same circumstances.

PSALM cxli. *Domine, clamavi.*

1. LORD, I call upon Thee, haste Thee unto me : and consider my voice when I cry unto Thee.

2. Let my prayer be set forth in Thy sight as the incense : and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.

The real prevailing power of all prayer, whenever and wherever it is offered before God, lies in its union with the one mighty Sacrifice which was offered upon the Cross. It is that alone which makes the prayers of the saints rise before the throne of God as incense from the golden censer; it is that alone which makes the daily lifting of our hands to be a daily sacrifice,—that it is one with His all-sufficient intercession, Who in the evening of this world's day spread abroad His hands on Calvary, and at the ninth hour, the time of the evening sacrifice, commended His Spirit into the hands of the Father of all spirits, and the Hearer of all prayer.

3. Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth : and keep the door of my lips.

4. O let not mine heart be inclined to any evil thing : let me not be occupied in ungodly works with the men that work wickedness, lest I eat of such things as please them.

As He was silent and spake not, so should His people learn to suffer and be silent too. They must ever cry to Him to guard their lips and rule their tongue, 'Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not.' Out of the mouth and out of the heart proceed those evil words and angry and unkind sayings which defile the man; and grace only can keep the door of the inclinations of the heart, and can stop the way against meditated and spoken sin. Grace only can keep us from companionship with the evil doers in their works and ways, and can restrain us from joining with them 'who serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly,' in their ungodly pleasures and their delights, which bring ruin to the soul. Like the Christian of old who had been feasting at the Table of the Lord, refrained from eating of the meats sacrificed to idols, so must the Christian now carefully shun all enjoyments in which sin claims any share.

5. Let the righteous rather smite me friendly : and reprove me.

6. But let not their precious balms break my head : yea, I will pray yet against their wickedness.

Heb. The righteous smites me in kindness and reproves me.

Balsam for the head my head does not reject.

Still will I pray against their wickedness.

LXX. The righteous will correct me in pity and reprove me.

The oil of the sinner shall not anoint my head.

For my prayer shall still be against the things that please them.

Thus did David's faith guide and direct his prayers and doings. He reposed, as did Christ in the day of His humiliation, with full trust upon the promise of the One Who alone is truly righteous,—‘I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to Me a son. If he fails, I will chastise him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the sons of men; but My loving-kindness shall not depart from him.’ The correction of the righteous God, like the reproof of righteous men, is often the truest token of His mercy and kindness. It is an anointing which, though at first it may falsely seem to drop from the vial of anger, yet is truly precious and gladdening in the end. It is different far from the anointing of the sinner; it bruises not, but mollifies and heals the bruises of ungodliness and wrong. It cheers the penitent to pray with still more fervent heart against the wickedness of those who go on still in their guilt.

7. Let their judges be overthrown in stony

places : that they may hear my words, for they are sweet.

Heb. Their judges were dismissed in the sides of the rock,
And they heard my words that they were sweet.

LXX. Their strong ones that were joined to the rock have
been swallowed up.

They shall hear my words that they have prevailed.

In the strength of this faith was David enabled to return good for evil to Saul, the judge and king of Israel, who sought his life, when he found him asleep in the sides of the cave of the wilderness of Engedi : and ‘the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thy hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good to thee ;’ and David would not stretch forth his hand to kill him, but merely cut off the skirt of his royal robe, and so let him depart unhurt. And this act of mercy was not without its reward ; for Saul for a while listened to David’s mild and gentle words, humbly pleading his own uprightness and harmlessness of life : ‘and it came to pass when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David ? And Saul lifted up his voice and wept.’

8. Our bones lie scattered before the pit :
like as when one breaketh and heweth wood
upon the earth.

Heb. As when one with a plough tears up the earth,
So do our bones lie scattered at the mouth of Sheol.

LXX. As the heaping of earth hath broken out upon the earth,
So our bones have been scattered before Hades.

Yet, for all this meekness and tenderness on the part of David towards his persecutor, within a little while Saul again sought his life, and was seeking with all his power to destroy him and his followers; just as but a short time before he had slain Ahimelech and all the priests, to the number of fourscore and five, and all the inhabitants of the city of Nob, because they had shewn kindness to David. The recollection of these men, so miserably slaughtered, and of their dead bodies laid in heaps upon the earth, like furrows on the new-ploughed land, or like splinterings of wood where one had been hewing timber,—must have been a sorrow ever present to David's mind. He could only cast it off by looking on to that day when the breath of God shall bring together the dead bones of the dead, and clothe them with flesh, and fill them with life again, and shall recall their souls from the mouth of the unseen world, in the morning of the coming Day.

9. But mine eyes look unto Thee, O Lord God : in Thee is my trust, O cast not out my soul.

Heb. Pour not out my soul.

10. Keep me from the snare that they have laid for me : and from the traps of the wicked doers.

11. Let the ungodly fall into their own nets together : and let me ever escape them.

The saints of God at all times and in all ages, and

not David only, have ever turned their looks to Him with adoring faith, praying Him to deliver them when the hour of death comes—to save them from the craft of the enemy, and from the deceits of the wicked. And they have ever found that that prayer has been granted, that ‘the wickedness of the wicked has ever been upon him, and the righteousness of the righteous has been upon him.’ Through the all-wise and all-just government of their God, the doers of wrong ever fall, the doers of right ever escape.

This “Psalm of David” was, it appears probable, written shortly before the one which follows it. Verse 7 is a difficult one to understand; but the best interpretation seems founded on the occurrences related in 1 Sam. xxiv., when David dismissed Saul, whom he had found sleeping in the cave of Engedi, without injuring him, though his life was in his power, and his men were anxious that he should take it. Another interpretation is, that the possessors of this world’s power were to be dashed to pieces before David. Verse 8 appears to refer to the slaughter of David’s friends at Nob, by Doeg the Edomite. With it may be compared Isa. xxvi. 19; Ezek. xxxvii. 1—14. The translation by the LXX. of these verses is very different; and in consequence, the commentaries on them of the Fathers are very various. This Psalm was probably used in after-times as an evening hymn.

Evening Prayer.

PSALM cxlii. *Voce mea ad Dominum.*

1. I CRIED unto the Lord with my voice :
yea, even unto the Lord did I make my sup-
plication.

2. I poured out my complaints before Him :
and shewed Him of my trouble.

Ever must we turn to the God of consolation with

prayer in all time of our tribulation, as with thanksgiving in all time of our wealth. To cry to Him with our voice and our heart—to pour out before Him our tears and our complaints—to shew to Him our trouble and our submission to His will—this is the only way for the sufferer to gain comfort, rest, and grace. Thus did David, when hiding from his tyrants in the cave of Adullam; thus did He Who was the Son of David, in His descent into the cave of the sepulchre, and into the prison of the unseen world.

3. When my spirit was in heaviness Thou knewest my path : in the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.

4. I looked also upon my right hand : and saw there was no man that would know me.

5. I had no place to flee unto : and no man cared for my soul.

‘Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?’ was the cry of the Son of Man in the time of His humiliation. He was ‘sore amazed and very heavy,’ but He gave Himself into His Father’s hand, saying, ‘Not My will, but Thine be done;’ and so He walked that sharp and weary road in which His enemies had set the cruel snare of the cross, and the bitter pit-fall of the grave. He looked in vain for any to help Him or to comfort Him, for His disciples had fled : there were none to honour or obey Him, for His own people of Israel declared, ‘We have no king but Cæsar.’ He looked upon His right hand, and there was there but the malefactor

that was crucified with Him. He was left alone in His sorrowings, in His patience, in His agony; for there was no way of escape but that He must drink that whole cup of passion to the dregs; and He was utterly desolate, so as to be forced to cry, 'My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?'

6. I cried unto Thee, O Lord, and said : Thou art my hope, and my portion in the land of the living.

7. Consider my complaint : for I am brought very low.

8. O deliver me from my persecutors : for they are too strong for me.

9. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks unto Thy Name : which thing if Thou wilt grant me, then shall the righteous resort unto my company.

Heb. Bring my soul out of prison, that men may praise Thy Name :

The righteous shall compass me about, when Thou art kind unto me.

LXX. Bring my soul out of prison to confess to Thy Name :

The righteous wait for me, until Thou shalt requite me.

He suffered the shame of the Cross; He bore the pains of death; He felt the anguish of desolation; yet still He prayed and cried unto the Eternal Father. 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit,'—this was His last and deepest cry, and this was His deliverance and His victory; for 'having said thus, He gave up the ghost.' And in the power

of that mighty sacrifice He ever prays in all His members, and with all His members, in the time of desolation and of grief—even as His Spirit prayed in Joseph in the pit, in David in the cave, in Jonah in the fish's belly, in St. Peter in Herod's dungeon,—‘O Lord, bring my soul out of prison;’ bring my soul out of the prison of sorrow, deliver me from the bonds of unrepented sin, free me from the confinement of this dying body, rescue me from the dungeon of the grave, save me from the pit of hell! Oh Thou Who wast delivered, do Thou deliver me! Thus shall our imprisoned soul, no longer the slave of sin, but being set free to God, leave the wards of this lower prison-house, and shall ascend amid immortal welcomings unto that assembly of the righteous which is waiting, while one by one the number of the elect is being accomplished; and where all join in everlasting gratitude to Him Who heard their cry and saved them.

This Psalm has the title, “A Maschil, or Instruction of David when he was in the cave; a Prayer.” This title resembles that of Psalm lvii., which was also written “when he fled from Saul in the cave.” Compare, therefore, the note on that Psalm. This Psalm was probably written before the fifty-seventh, as it is a fervent and earnest prayer, while that partakes rather of the character of a thanksgiving. And as the Church, by appointing Pa. lvii. for Easter-day, has directly pointed out its prophetic and spiritual application to our Lord, so too the present Psalm, from its evident connection and similarity of title, has always been understood by the Fathers in the same spiritual meaning. The cave of David was a type of the sepulchre of the Son of David. This cave was most probably that of Adullam, into which David had escaped from Saul, (1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2). Compare also 1 Sam. xxiv.

FOR ASH-WEDNESDAY, BEING THE SEVENTH
PENITENTIAL PSALM.PSALM cxliii. *Domine, exaudi.*

1. HEAR my prayer, O Lord, and consider my desire : hearken unto me for Thy truth and righteousness' sake.

2. And enter not into judgment with Thy servant : for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.

That which we repentant sinners crave most and foremost from the mercy of God is, that He will not enter into judgment with us strictly and extremely. His first righteousness, which is the righteousness of justice, is very terrible ; none can abide it. Flesh and blood cannot stand in His sight : no man living can be justified before God by his own feelings or his own doings ; he must be found guilty of transgression of the law. But the second righteousness of God is the righteousness of perfect mercy, by which He hears our prayer, and accepts our penitence, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. In Him Who is perfect in His just-doing are we found just too ; so that we can boldly ask, ' Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth.'

3. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul ; he hath smitten my life down to the ground : he hath laid me in the darkness, as the men that have been long dead.

If we look to ourselves, our own works and ways,

we see how often and how sadly we have fallen. The enemy hath hunted our soul by every temptation, and hath again and again overcome us. He hath smitten us down into the abasement of utter self-contempt; He hath brought us well-nigh to the darkness of despair, in which dwell the living dead—the dead in soul and conscience,—whose state of horror and gloomy misery is but faintly shadowed forth by the horror and gloom of the sepulchres of those whose bodies have been long time dead.

4. Therefore is my spirit vexed within me : and my heart within me is desolate.

5. Yet do I remember the time past ; I muse upon all Thy works : yea, I exercise myself in the works of Thy hands.

If we look to ourselves, we can have but vexation of spirit and desolateness of heart; therefore, if we would repent indeed, let us rather look to God—think of His mercies in time past—ponder over His gracious and wonderful dealings in all the world—reflect diligently upon the almightiness of His love, and the power of His salvation.

6. I stretch forth my hands unto Thee : my soul gaspeth unto Thee as a thirsty land. .

7. Hear me, O Lord, and that soon, for my spirit waxeth faint : hide not Thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.

So will the weary hands be raised yet again in

prayer, through faith in Him Who stretched forth His hands upon the Cross ; so will the fainting soul wait and long for the outpouring of His grace, Who upon the Cross said, ' I thirst,' for our salvation, even as the parched-up fields and dying herbs seem to gasp and pant like living things for the sweet and cheering showers in the fierce heat of summer. So will the soul cry to be heard, and that soon, lest its faith grow faint with delay : and the hiding of God's face, the denying of His smile of pardon, will press on the spirit like sickness, and weigh it down like the heaviness of death.

8. O let me hear Thy loving-kindness be-
times in the morning, for in Thee is my trust :
shew Thou me the way that I should walk in,
for I lift up my soul unto Thee.

9. Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies :
for I flee unto Thee to hide me.

10. Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth
Thee, for Thou art my God : let Thy loving
Spirit lead me forth into the land of righteous-
ness.

But as the sight of the divine righteousness of
mercy grows clearer—as it will, if we cry for pardon
and faint not—the prayer of the penitent becomes
more hopeful and more strong. He begs early for
the absolving word of pardon and of love, that the
morning of peace may follow the night of sorrow.
His spirit looks on in faith to the morning of the

Resurrection, and hears the loving words which the Saviour then shall speak unto His own. He asks to be shewn the upward road, and lifts up his soul that it may meet the descending graces of the Holy Ghost. He petitions for deliverance, and he goes at once to the Deliverer, and would hide himself and his sorrow in his Saviour's spear-pierced heart. He desires to know and to do what is well-pleasing in the sight of Him Who is his Redeemer, his God, his all. He longs to be guided by the loving Spirit of his loving Father from this thirsty land of drouth and dread, into the land of holiness, and peace, and life.

11. Quicken me, O Lord, for Thy Name's sake : and for Thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.

12. And of Thy goodness slay mine enemies : and destroy all them that vex my soul ; for I am Thy servant.

So through that life-giving Spirit from Whom cometh all that is good and all that is true, doth the penitent find life to his soul and pardon for his sins past. And so by the same Spirit can he pray concerning all his lusts, and evil affections, and unholy thoughts and longings—Slay them, O Saviour of my soul, for they have slain Thee ; and they will slay me, unless by Thy cross and passion Thou wilt deliver me from their assaults and power ! I serve Thee, and no other Lord ; Oh make Thou me Thine own, Whose own I long to be !

This is "a Psalm of David," written, it would seem likely, about the time of the rebellion of Absalom, when the punishment of his sin came heavily upon him, though not unaccompanied by the hope of forgiveness through faith and prayer. It was perhaps used as a morning confession. It is appointed by the Church for Ash-Wednesday, and is the seventh and last of the Penitential Psalms. These seven Penitential Psalms are also sometimes called "the Special Psalms," and have long been used in the Church as the completest and most spiritual acts of repentance which she possesses. They have sometimes been considered as directed against the seven deadly sins; as, for instance, Psalm vi. against Wrath; Ps. xxxii. against Pride; Ps. xxxviii. against Gluttony; Ps. li. against Impurity; Ps. cii. against Covetousness; Ps. cxxx. against Envy, and the present Psalm against Indifference, or Carelessness.

Morning Prayer.

PSALM cxliv. *Benedictus Dominus.*

1. BLESSED be the Lord my strength : Who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.

2. My hope and my fortress, my castle and deliverer, my defender in Whom I trust : Who subdueth my people that is under me.

The Lord is our strength. He Who gave the victory to David over Goliath gives the victory to His people in their conflicts with the Evil one. Blessed be He Who placeth in our hands the shield of faith to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and Who teacheth us ever how to wield 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.' He is our all in all, our hope, our deliverance, and our salvation; and

through Him only can we bring into subjection, and rule and order rightly, our thoughts, and impulses, and desires, which the conscience of the Christian man, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, should ever govern and restrain, as a wise monarch governs and restrains his people.

3. Lord, what is man, that Thou hast such respect unto him : or the son of man, that Thou so regardest him ?

4. Man is like a thing of nought : his time passeth away like a shadow.

Lord, what is man, for whom Thou diedst ? What is there in us, unwise, sinful, selfish that we are, that Thou shouldest love us with Thine Almighty love ? Thou didst become as we are that we might become as Thou art ; Thou didst empty Thyself and become a thing of nought, that we might be filled with glory and immortality ! Oh may we ever be one with Thee Who wast made one with us, that when our time shall pass into nothingness, like a shadow when the sun is setting, we may abide in Thy eternity, which endureth like Thy mercy and Thy truth !

5. Bow Thy heavens, O Lord, and come down : touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.

6. Cast forth Thy lightning, and tear them : shoot out Thine arrows, and consume them.

7. Send down Thine hand from above : de-

liver me, and take me out of the great waters, from the hand of strange children ;

8. Whose mouth talketh of vanity : and their right hand is a right hand of wickedness.

Yea, O Lord of unchanging love, what marvels of Thy world of nature, what darkness of clouds, what fearfulness of earthquakes, what brightness of lightnings,—though all these were attending on Thy work of redemption,—can equal the wonders of Thy grace in the salvation of the world ! God sent not forth His messengers, but He Himself came down ; His own hand was stretched out to save His people from the mighty flood of this world's iniquity : His own right hand delivered them, and ever shall deliver them, from the right hand of evil and profane men, who make their 'confident boasting' of things of nought, and whose chief support and resource is in a lie.

9. I will sing a new song unto Thee, O God : and sing praises unto Thee upon a ten-stringed lute.

10. Thou hast given victory unto kings : and hast delivered David Thy servant from the peril of the sword.

He hath saved us ; and our part is to praise Him for His salvation. He who believeth in the New Testament, he who hath loved the new life, he who hath received the new Bread and the new Wine of the new law,—he singeth a new song unto his God.

The keeping of the ten precepts of His commandments is, in the sight of God, a life-long chant of praise upon a ten-stringed lute. And surely this praise is due unto Him 'Who hath made us kings and priests,' and hath subdued Satan under our feet, Who hath raised up the Son of David to overcome the sharpness of death, and to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

11. Save me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children : whose mouth talketh of vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of iniquity.

12. That our sons may grow up as the young plants : and that our daughters may be as the polished corners of the temple.

LXX. Their daughters beautified,
Adorned as the likeness of the temple.

13. That our garners may be full and plentiful with all manner of store : that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets.

14. That our oxen may be strong to labour, that there be no decay : no leading into captivity, and no complaining in our streets.

And the more we contemplate the mightiness of this salvation, the wonders of our deliverance from 'the corruption that is in the world through lust,' and from the powers of this vain and evil world, the more shall we love it and the more shall we desire it. It

is through the salvation of Christ alone that our sons can grow up from their youth in the power of baptismal grace, 'like trees planted by the water-side, that will bring forth their fruit in due season.' It is through that salvation that our daughters can be adorned, 'as becometh women professing godliness, with good works,' and so be like the columns in His temple, whose glory is not so much in the beauty of their form or the lustre of their polish, as in the holiness which they have from being portions of the building in which the All-holy dwells. The salvation of our Lord fills His Church with good works, as His goodness fills the garner of the husbandman with corn; He multiplies the pious members of His Church, His sheep who know His voice, His lambs, whom He carries in His bosom, until He shall increase them to that infinite 'multitude which no man can number.' He fills His priests and ministers, who labour in the word like oxen in the threshing-floor, with grace to believe and strength to preach His Gospel. He drives away all foes: He gives to all security and freedom in 'quiet resting-places;' He fills all with comfort, and heals all sorrow.

15. Happy are the people that are in such a case: yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God.

Happy are they on whom these blessings fall; happy are the members of the visible Church of Christ on earth. Yea, blessed are they who feel and know that the Lord their God is still keeping unto

them His most true promise of being with them always, even to the end of the world.

This Psalm has in the Hebrew the title of "by David," which the LXX. render "by David concerning Goliath." Verse 10 seems to give some support to this title of the LXX. But there is no doubt but that this is a Psalm of David. Verses 1, 2 are almost the same as the opening verse of Psalm xviii., and verse 3 is nearly identical with verse 4 of Psalm viii. Verses 7, 8, and 11 were probably sung in chanting by a single voice answering to a full chorus.

FOR WHITSUNDAY.

PSALM cxlv. *Exaltabo Te, Deus.*

1. I WILL magnify Thee, O God, my King :
and I will praise Thy Name for ever and ever.

2. Every day will I give thanks unto Thee :
and praise Thy Name for ever and ever.

To him who saith unto God, Thou art my King, God Himself shall say, Thou art My servant. The same eternal Spirit Which enableth us to say the one maketh us the other. Therefore do we magnify our King, for that He hath poured His Spirit upon all flesh, giving us all good and all truth,—giving us each day our daily bread, for which we return Him daily thanks—giving us everlasting life, for which we return Him everlasting praise.

3. Great is the Lord, and marvellous, worthy to be praised : there is no end of His greatness.

4. One generation shall praise Thy works unto another : and declare Thy power.

Mighty, wonderful, and infinite is the goodness and the holiness of God ; none can place their limits ; none can understand their fulness. Yet the less they can be comprehended, the more are they to be marvelled at. It is not for one generation only, that He hath stretched out the heavens, and laid in their order the earth, the sea, the air, the fountains and rivers, the trees and herbs, and all their uses and their beauty,—that He hath arranged the courses of nature ceaseless and constant, the changes of seasons, the night, the day, the sun, the stars, the moon, and all things which are, and have been created. These have been signs from generation to generation, of the love of our Father and our God, bearing a long and enduring witness to His Almighty righteousness and truth.

5. As for me, I will be talking of Thy worship : Thy glory, Thy praise, and wondrous works ;

6. So that men shall speak of the might of Thy marvellous acts : and I will also tell of Thy greatness.

7. The memorial of Thine abundant kindness shall be shewed : and men shall sing of Thy righteousness.

The glory and the wonderfulness of His works of creation, the grandeur and majesty of His judgments in chastising the guilty ; the strangeness and the abundance of His mercy in pardoning the repenting ; the mighty mysteries of the Incarnation of

His Son, the surpassing Sacrifice of the Cross, the infinite love of the Atonement,—all these are marvels for the believing soul to commune of with itself, to talk of with others, to sing praises for in the Church unweariedly.

8. The Lord is gracious, and merciful : long-suffering, and of great goodness.

9. The Lord is loving unto every man : and His mercy is over all His works.

Grace and mercy are indeed the attributes of Him Who gave His Son to die for us, and Who sent the Holy Ghost to comfort and to hallow us. He Himself proclaimed Himself to be ‘the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.’ He bore with us long, He suffered us and our provokings with infinite patience ; yet His goodness conquered and prevailed at last. God is love, and loveth every man ; He is ‘our Saviour, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.’ All that He hath made He watcheth over in mercy.

10. All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord : and Thy saints give thanks unto Thee.

11. They shew the glory of Thy kingdom : and talk of Thy power ;

12. That Thy power, Thy glory, and mightiness of Thy kingdom : might be known unto men.

13. Thy kingdom is an everlasting king-

dom : and Thy dominion endureth throughout all ages.

LXX. Ver. 14. The Lord is faithful in all His words :
And holy in all His works.

And because His mercy is over all His works, therefore do all His works praise Him ; they set forth His glory, each in their order and after their manner, both they that have speech and they that have not. But especially do His faithful people exalt His praise and worship by giving up themselves to be the temples of the Holy Ghost. In Him, and through Him Who alone can sanctify, do the elect of God 'set forth in their own tongues the wonderful works of God' in a continual Pentecost. His people shew forth His glory and preach His power by living according to His will ; so do they make known the mightiness of His kingdom unto men by being themselves His subjects and His servants. His kingdom is not like that of an earthly king, which lasts for a time ; but it is everlasting ; and therefore must His people acknowledge His sovereignty in their heart no less than with their mouths. Their unceasing confession, which, at the bidding of their Lord, when they pray, they ever make is—'For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.' Yea, His kingdom shall endure through all ages, Whose words are ever truth, and Whose works are ever holiness.

14. The Lord upholdeth all such as fall :
and lifteth up all those that are down.

15. The eyes of all wait upon Thee, O Lord : and Thou givest them their meat in due season.

16. Thou openest Thine hand : and fillest all things living with plenteousness.

And the mightiness of His kingdom is manifested by the power of the Holy Ghost strengthening the weak through the grace of Sacraments, and raising the fallen through the pardon of Absolution. ‘Be of good cheer,’ ‘Thy sins are forgiven thee,’—these are the workings of His power, by which the glory of His kingdom is made known to man. The eyes of all creation wait upon His hand, He openeth it and they are filled with good ; the eyes of the penitent and the believing wait also upon the same loving God ; and to them, too, He openeth His hand,—He revealeth Christ His Son,—and they are filled with the plenteous comfort of the Holy Ghost.

17. The Lord is righteous in all His ways : and holy in all His works.

18. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him : yea, all such as call upon Him faithfully.

19. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him : He also will hear their cry, and will help them.

Thus all the dealings of God with His creatures, all His revealings of Himself to man, all His providences and orderings, both in the world and in the

Church, are righteous and full of holiness. He is near to all in His presence everywhere: He is especially near to them who call upon Him faithfully, in the presence of His Only-begotten Son, in the Holy Eucharist. At all times, and then especially, He fulfils the desire of them who fear Him and trust in Him, hearing and answering their prayer, and making His strength perfect in their weakness.

20. The Lord preserveth all them that love Him: but scattereth abroad all the ungodly.

21. My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh give thanks unto His holy Name for ever and ever.

He saveth them who love Him, for to love Him is eternal salvation; He destroyeth them who love Him not, for not to love Him is eternal destruction. He is ever gathering His people by His giving them His Holy Spirit; He is ever scattering abroad the disobedient, through their resisting His Holy Spirit. But where the Holy Ghost is,—and He is ever with them who pray the Father for Him,—there is peace, hope, comfort; there is grateful thanksgiving, and a mouth that speaketh praise from the heart; there is a body consecrated to be a habitation of God through the Spirit, a temple of the Holy Ghost, which Christ the Lord shall hereafter raise up in immortality at the resurrection of all flesh, even as He has raised His own, to abide for ever unto the glory and the praise of God.

This is a "Praise-song of David;" so called from the rapture of

thankfulness and wonder in which the Psalmist-king dwells upon the goodness and grace of God. There was a saying among the ancient Jews that "he could not fail of being a child of the world to come, who should recite this Psalm three times every day," that is, at each of his devotions. The Psalm is alphabetical, but the verse after verse 13, which should begin with the letter *Nun*, or N, in the Hebrew, appears to be lost; it however existed in the time of the LXX interpreters, who have preserved it in their translation. With verse 8 compare Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6, 7. This Psalm is fitly chosen by the Church for Whitsunday.

PSALM cxlvi. *Lauda, anima mea.*

1. PRAISE the Lord, O my soul; while I live will I praise the Lord : yea, as long as I have any being, I will sing praises unto my God.

Where we end there must we begin, with praise to our God—with the praise of the soul, for that is the soul of praise; while all our life and all our being, through the time of this mortality and through the ages of immortality, should be justly given to the praise of the ever-blessed Three Persons in One God.

2. O put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man : for there is no help in them.

3. For when the breath of man goeth forth he shall turn again to his earth : and then all his thoughts perish.

We cannot trust in kings or the great ones of the earth; we pray for them as needing grace like our-

selves. We cannot trust in any child of man, for they are all weak, selfish, and helpless things ; they must die, and return to the dust of which they were made. Sinners may trust in the world, which is ever passing, and in the things of earth which are ever passing ; but they who cleave to the things that are passing away will pass away with them. Men's thoughts, and plans, and arrangements must perish with the world which perisheth. The whole is passing away, and therefore every part must pass away likewise.

4. Blessed is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help : and whose hope is in the Lord his God ;

5. Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is : Who keepeth His promise for ever ;

6. Who helpeth them to right that suffer wrong : Who feedeth the hungry.

7. The Lord looseth men out of prison : the Lord giveth sight to the blind.

8. The Lord helpeth them that are fallen : the Lord careth for the righteous.

9. The Lord careth for the strangers ; He defendeth the fatherless and widow : as for the way of the ungodly, He turneth it upside down.

Woe to the man that putteth his trust in man ; but joy to him who putteth his trust in his Lord !

He is the one mighty Help, the one true Hope, Who created earth and heaven, and all things in them seen and unseen, Whose word standeth fast for ever, and Who, in the synagogue of Nazareth, 'opened the book of the prophet Esaias, and found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord . . . And then He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.' He worked of old and still worketh, giving right to them that suffer wrong, and feeding them that hunger. He still doeth miracles, as He did in Galilee; for when the covetous is made liberal, then is the withered hand restored; when faith and hope are given to the careless, then the blind and dumb in soul are healed; when a sinner is brought from going astray, then the deaf is made to hear; when an ungodly man is converted, then the dead is raised. For these miracles we glorify the Lord, as also for His unceasing love and care for all His redeemed. He receives all who come to Him in faith and penitence; He watches over the poor and the sorrowful, for their comfort and help; and He watches over the ungodly, to turn him, if it may be, from the error of his way, but, at last, if he repent not, to turn his evil way to chastisement and to destruction.

10. The Lord thy God, O Sion, shall be King for evermore : and throughout all generations.

All this He is ever doing in His own good time. For He is King over all. His title was set over His throne on Golgotha, written in three tongues,—‘The King of the Jews.’ It was written in Hebrew, for the Jews, who gloried in the law ; in Greek, for the Greeks, who gloried in their wisdom ; in Latin, for the Romans, who gloried in their dominion : and thus, in the day of His passion, was the Son of God declared to be the King of all holiness—the King of all wisdom—the King of all might. Now in glory He reigns for ever and ever : He is not like earthly princes, who die, and then all their thoughts perish. He can wait His own time ; He needs not to make haste. Let us wait the time of our redemption, trusting in Him, the everlasting King over His Church, and we shall know, at last, that He will keep His promise even for ever. Alleluia.

The writer of this Psalm is not known. The LXX. call it an “ Alleluia of Haggai and Zechariah.” It would appear from verses 6—9 that the writer was acquainted with the prophecy of Isaiah (lxi. 1, 2).

Evening Prayer.

PSALM cxlvi. *Laudate Dominum.*

1. O PRAISE the Lord, for it is a good thing to sing praises unto our God : yea, a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful.

To shew forth our love and thankfulness to the Father of love and mercy in songs of praise is ever good ; it is good for us, and it is acceptable to Him. The true voice of the Church is praise even more than prayer. Praise lifts us up from the wants, and sins, and lowness of earth, and carries us into the joy of heaven, and unites us to the blessed choir of angels and saints, whose work is the expressing of eternal thankfulness, eternal love, eternal praise.

2. The Lord doth build up Jerusalem : and gather together the out-casts of Israel.

With Ezra and Nehemiah God first collected the wanderers of Israel, and then built up the temporal Jerusalem ; but the spiritual Jerusalem God is ever building, and in building He collecteth His chosen ones from the world. 'He addeth to the Church such as shall be saved ;' He hath laid her foundations, and is rearing up her walls ; and unto her He is gathering the children of God that are scattered abroad. The true Israel here are ever scattered, homeless and outcast, in a land which is not theirs. Christ buildeth them a city, even the Jerusalem above.

3. He healeth those that are broken in heart : and giveth medicine to heal their sickness.

He is the Father of all ; He healeth the contrite and the penitent, binding up their wounds who are left half-dead by the way-side of the world, and pouring into them oil and wine. He is the great

Physician, Who healeth the sickness of our dying nature by the costly medicine of His holy Sacraments, the remedies against death and sin, the pledges of eternal health, the unctions of immortality.

4. He telleth the number of the stars : and calleth them all by their names.

And not only is He Lord of the penitents, but He is also the King of saints, the Lord of them whose 'names are written in heaven.' He beholdeth not only the things of earth, but also the things of heaven, where the saints, who now and here are hidden, shine forth, like the stars, in immortal brightness. He Who set the stars in the firmament in their order counteth His elect, and ordaineth to each his calling, and giveth to each his name. 'He knoweth them that are His,' and giveth to each one of them His own gifts and graces, glorifying them with unearthly light. Those stars are all numbered which Abraham saw in heaven, which Isaac received for his seed, which Paul discerned in glory. He calleth those stars by their names, which are the lights of the world, and which comfort the darkness of our night.

5. Great is our Lord, and great is His power : yea, and His wisdom is infinite.

6. The Lord setteth up the meek : and bringeth the ungodly down to the ground.

Almighty in power, infinite in wisdom, the Lord reverses the judgment which the world passes upon itself and its doings. What the world despises He

exalts; and what the world commends He brings down. He setteth the last first; He blesseth the poor in spirit with the inheritance of His kingdom, while 'the lofty city He layeth low.' When the meek shall be raised up to shine with the brightness of stars 'in his right hand,' the ungodly shall be brought down to the dust. He will execute upon these in its fulness His sentence, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.'

7. O sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving : sing praises upon the harp unto our God ;

8. Who covereth the heaven with clouds, and prepareth rain for the earth : and maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains, and herb for the use of men ;

9. Who giveth fodder unto the cattle : and feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him.

Let us therefore praise Him, not only with words of thankfulness, but with works of holiness and faith, Who ordereth all nature for our good, Who sendeth the showers and the rain, and prepareth for man and for beast the kindly fruits of the earth. Praise we Him Who hath given us His Holy Scripture, with its types and mysteries, spreading it before us like heaven with its clouds ; Who sends down the dews of His continual grace, and makes the ministers and rulers of His Church to be clothed with good works, like the mountains which are clothed with verdure ; Who tendeth His sheep with everlasting care, and Who, through faith, giveth the food of His grace to

the children of the heathen who were out of the ark of the Church and alien from God, when they call upon Him, even as He feedeth the young ravens, when they hunger and cry to Him for food.

10. He hath no pleasure in the strength of an horse : neither delighteth He in any man's legs.

11. But the Lord's delight is in them that fear Him : and put their trust in His mercy.

His pleasure is not wrought by human means; He doth not covet, like an earthly king, the pride and power of armies, the speed of cavalry, or the marchings of infantry. Neither the horses of Pharaoh, nor the lightness of foot of Asahel, can do anything either for Him or against Him. 'He that is swift of foot shall not deliver himself; neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself.' All he requires is the holy fear and reverence of them who seek His mercy—of them who stand in awe of Him, and yet through awe of Him flee unto Him.

12. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem : praise thy God, O Sion.

13. For He hath made fast the bars of thy gates : and hath blessed thy children within thee.

14. He maketh peace in thy borders : and filleth thee with the flour of wheat.

To Him let the whole Church, seen and unseen, the Sion of earth with the Jerusalem in heaven, join

in one universal Alleluia. He hath established her bars, even the Apostles, through whose preaching we enter within her. He hath strengthened and made fast her gates, that the gates of hell should never prevail against her; He hath filled her with children, 'which is the mother of us all;' and hath filled her children with blessings without number. He maketh peace in her borders, so that they who enter within her borders enter into peace. 'He calleth her walls salvation, and her gates praise.' Thus He doeth to the Church on earth; and with still greater love doth He watch over that land which the meek shall inherit—that everlasting city whose walls and bars shall be made so fast that no adversary can enter there. Now many come into the Church whom we would not,—many enter in to injure and to spoil; there it shall not be so,—there the gates shall be firm with the firmness of eternity, and the dwellers in that high city shall praise their Lord in eternal safety and in eternal peace. Meanwhile he filleth His people, even here, with the Bread of Life, with that choice wheat which for us was bruised and was buried in the earth, and for us sprang up again, bearing the fruit of salvation, and becoming the food of immortality. Christ is the wheat wherewith God satisfieth the people of His Sion, sending Him from heaven, as He sent the manna in the desert.

15. He sendeth forth His commandment upon earth : and His word runneth very swiftly.

Him did the Father send forth upon the earth, Who is His Word, and Who kept His commandment and finished His work—running His course from heaven to earth, and from earth again to heaven, with the swiftness of infinite compassion for our dying souls.

16. He giveth snow like wool : and scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.

17. He casteth forth His ice like morsels : who is able to abide His frost ?

18. He sendeth out His word, and melteth them : He bloweth with His wind, and the waters flow.

And when the creatures He has made become cold and hardened for lack of His love within their hearts, when their affections are colder than the snow, and their consciences harder than the morsels of ice, and their souls are dying, like living things in a piercing frost which they cannot bear,—then He sendeth forth His all-loving Son, crucified for their salvation, and loving them unto the end ; and He bloweth upon them with His wind, the soft breathings of His Holy Spirit ; and their frozen heart, hardened like ice in the long cold night of this cheerless world, is melted through the shining of the Sun of righteousness, and their softened soul dissolves into repenting and longing tears with the warmth of the Saviour's love, and under the gentle influence of that Spirit of grace, Which bloweth where He listeth.

19. He sheweth His word unto Jacob : His statutes and ordinances unto Israel.

20. He hath not dealt so with any nation : neither have the heathen knowledge of His laws.

And to this end He hath set before His people the Gospel of salvation, 'speaking unto them in these last days by His Son,' giving unto them who have been baptized into His Name and have been made children of Abraham, both the knowledge of His will, and grace to fulfil the same. Truly, then, are the people of His Church favoured, chosen, elect, beyond all the nations of the world who know not God, for that He is come nigh to them, and hath brought them nigh to Him. Alleluia.

This Psalm is the second of the series of five hymns of praise, which are called the "Hallelujah Psalms," because their only title is "Hallelujah," and which conclude the Psalter. They were probably written by some of the prophets after the captivity; and the LXX. assign them to "Haggai and Zechariah;" but the authority of this title is not sufficient for certainty. The LXX. and the Vulgate translations divide this Psalm into two, after verse 11, calling the former half-Psalm cxlvi., and the latter half, commencing with verse 12, Psalm cxlvii.; thus they fall again into the numbering of the Hebrew, which through a large portion of the Psalter is one in advance of these translations. [Verses 16—18 are interpreted by some of the fathers spiritually of God's sending tribulation and trial, through the hardness of which we must enter His kingdom. Others prefer the interpretation given above.] Bishop Horsley considers this Psalm to have been used at Pentecost, or at the Feast of Trumpets. It ends, as do all the other "Hallelujah Psalms," with the same "Hallelujah" with which it began.

PSALM cxlvi. *Laudate Dominum.*

1. O PRAISE the Lord of heaven : praise Him in the height.

2. Praise Him, all ye angels of His : praise Him, all His host.

To Him—Who made all things, in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, in the fulness of His love and power, let all things in heaven and earth render back their love again. Let all love created ever return again to the Love creating and uncreated, from Which it sprang, and of Which it is a shadow. Let all things made bless that Lord God of Sabaoth Who made them all. Let them praise their God and their Father, Whose throne is heaven and Whose footstool is earth, both around His throne and beneath His feet. ‘Glory to God in the highest’ is the one voice of the universe of created beings,—‘Glory to God,’ sounding clearest, loudest, fullest, as it is highest and nearest to His throne, but still caught up by order after order of worlds, and by rank after rank of angels, and passing through all that infinite universe which yet is filled by the all-Father’s love, until, changing in degree, but still the same in praise, it is uttered by the lowest and the smallest in the mighty system of created things. Praise Him, ye Angels and Archangels of His, for ye can praise Him worthily! Praise Him all ye His spiritual host, ye who rest not day or night in your adoring song,—ye Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and

Powers, ye Cherubim and Seraphim, and whatever name is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come,—ye who are highest, praise the Highest in the highest!

3. Praise Him, sun and moon : praise Him, all ye stars and light.

4. Praise Him, all ye heavens : and ye waters that are above the heavens.

Let the sun, the fount of light, and warmth, and gladness, the greater light which rules the day, the visible emblem of the Uncreated Wisdom, the Light Which lighteth every man, the Centre round Whom all our hopes and fears, our wants and prayers, our faith and love, are ever moving,—let the moon, the lesser light which rules the night, the type of the Church, which giveth to the world the light she gains from the Sun of righteousness,—let the stars, so vast in their number, so lovely in their arrangement and their brightness, which God hath appointed in the heavens, even as He hath appointed His elect to shine for ever and ever,—let all the heavens, with all their wonders and their worlds, the depths of space above, and the waters which are above the firmament, the images of God's Holy Scripture and of the glories and the mysteries contained therein,—let these ever praise Him Who made and blessed them in the beginning of the creation.

5. Let them praise the Name of the Lord : for He spake the word, and they were made ; He commanded, and they were created.

6. He hath made them fast for ever and ever : He hath given them a law which shall not be broken.

By His Word He made them, saying, Let them be ; and they were. The Only-begotten Son, the image of His Person, created these worlds in their wise order, after the patterns which existed eternally in the mind of the Father ; and He set them their unchanging laws of motion, which they obey perfectly and unfailingly. He creates, and He ordains a law for His creation, by one and the same act of wisdom and of power. And by obeying this law of their creating, by continuing in that order in which they all appear beautiful before the eye of God, do they truly praise Him, being herein an example to man, teaching him that the true praise of His God is the due fulfilling of His righteous laws.

7. Praise the Lord upon earth : ye dragons, and all deeps ;

8. Fire and hail, snow and vapours : wind and storm, fulfilling His word ;

9. Mountains and all hills : fruitful trees and all cedars ;

10. Beasts and all cattle : worms and feathered fowls ;

11. Kings of the earth and all people : princes and all judges of the world ;

12. Young men and maidens, old men and

children, praise the Name of the Lord : for His Name only is excellent, and His praise above heaven and earth.

And as He is praised in heaven, so let Him be praised on earth. Let His love be acknowledged, no less than His will be done 'on earth as it is in heaven.' Let the sea, and all that therein is,—the depths of the waters, and the great whales, their wonderful inhabitants, those creatures of the fifth day, who came before man to dwell on this lower globe, and who are types of the dwellers in the many waters of the world,—let the instruments by which He fertilizes the earth, or clears the air, the lightning and the hail, the snow and the clouds, the wind and the storm, which are His ministers and execute His commands in chastising or in gladdening the sons of men, and some of which He has at different times chosen to represent, or to accompany, the manifestations of His Holy Spirit and the movements of His grace,—let the solid earth itself, its mountains and its hills, which rise up towards heaven, standing above the plain like the rulers stand in the Church of God,—let the trees bearing fruit, like faithful and good servants, the cedars of Lebanon, like the sanctified who shall be placed in the building of the eternal temple,—let all the beasts of the forest, the herds and the flocks of the plain, whether they be wild and fierce, like hearts untamed by grace ; or whether they be gentle and peaceful, like the ministers of the Word, and the flock of

Christ,—let the worms which are of the earth, and creep upon the earth, as do the poor in faith,—let the birds which fly in the open firmament of heaven, like spiritual and soaring souls,—let all these join, each after their kind, to praise Him of Whose goodness they are, and for Whose glory they are. And what then? After dragons, and fire, and hail,—after mountains, and trees, and cattle,—shall have uttered their song of praise, and fulfilled the law of their creation, shall man, the last of the things made, formed in the image of the Maker, be silent? Should he not be covered with shame to see all things, seen and unseen, in earth and heaven, praising the Lord, while he alone praises Him not? Oh, let the race of man, created first by the word of God, and then created anew a second time by the death of God, in all stations, in all ranks, in all ages and seasons of life, whether high or low, whether young or old, praise Him both with their words and works! Each one may worthily praise Him Who has given his life and his own place to each one, if each one will but praise with all his life, and power, and soul. Let us, then, copy the cattle by our following Christ—the fruit-bearing trees by our good works—the mountain by our nearness to heaven—the wind by our fulfilling His word—the fire by our ready zeal—the deeps by our unfathomed love. His goodness extends over heaven and earth, praise we Him, therefore, with heaven and earth,—praise we Him upon earth, among the things seen, and we shall hereafter praise Him in heaven among the things unseen.

13. He shall exalt the horn of His people ; all His saints shall praise Him : even the children of Israel, even the people that serveth Him. ,

He exalteth His people, and, beyond all, Christ, the Saviour and strength of His people ; therefore His saints, whom the Holy Ghost hath made His own, the children of the true Israel, whom He hath chosen, the righteous nation who serve Him with obedience here, shall serve Him with eternal praises above. Alleluia.

This is also a "Hallelujah Psalm," founded upon the first chapter of Genesis, and in this respect resembling the Song of the Three Children. It enumerates all the objects of creation,—the unseen (verses 1, 2,) and the seen ; then of the latter, the things above (verses 3, 4,) and those below ; and again, of these latter, the sea (verse 7), and the air (verse 8), and the land ; and, yet again, of the things of the land—first, the inanimate and the irrational creatures (verses 9, 10), and then the rational, each in their order. The word rendered "dragons" in verse 7 is similar to that translated "whales" in Gen. i. 21, and implies creatures of great length of body. It no doubt signified those mighty creatures of the lizard tribe which came into being at the fourth period of creation, the fossil remains of which excite at the present day our wonder and admiration. This is a noble and glorious Psalm of praise, which Bishop Horsley considers to have been written for use on the Sabbath-day.

PSALM cxlix. *Cantate Domino.*

1. O SING unto the Lord a new song : let the congregation of saints praise Him.

2. Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him : and let the children of Sion be joyful in their King.

All praise and all joy, each chanting of the new song which each one sings who hath 'put off the old man and his deeds,' carries the Church on in the power of the Spirit to that coming time when the Lord Jesus shall reign in majesty over the obedient world, and His saints shall praise Him with one mind and with one mouth, as the Creator of all, and the visible and acknowledged King of all. The elect of Christ shall see their Lord Who loved them, even as He is; and seeing Him they shall 'rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' They shall 'say Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.'

3. Let them praise His Name in the dance : let them sing praises unto Him with tabret and harp.

4. For the Lord hath pleasure in His people : and helpeth the meek-hearted.

They shall yield unto Him then the perfect praise of their lives, no less than of their lips; they shall rejoice, 'with music and dancing,' over the return of the world, once prodigal and afar off, but now returned again unto its Father and its Lord and God. They shall praise Him with the tabret of a body dead indeed, and for ever, unto sin, and with the harp of a spirit full of the Holy Ghost. And this shall stir up and call forth their thankful joy, that the words of Him Who died for them are true for evermore, and fulfilled for every one,—'As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you;' and again, 'Fear not, little

flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' 'And again they say Alleluia.'

5. Let the saints be joyful with glory : let them rejoice in their beds.

Then shall they whose names are in the book of life taste of immortal glory in Him Who hath glorified them. For them the night will be spent; for them the day will have come. They shall awake from their sleep of death, and shall rise in exulting gladness from the graves which have been so long their beds; and they shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead live not again until the thousand years are finished. 'This is the first resurrection,'—an awful mystery, which is indeed revealed now, but shall only be made fully manifest hereafter.

6. Let the praises of God be in their mouth : and a two-edged sword in their hands ;

7. To be avenged of the heathen : and to rebuke the people ;

8. To bind their kings in chains : and their nobles with links of iron.

9. That they may be avenged of them, as it is written : Such honour have all His saints.

Heb. That they may execute upon them the judgment that is written.

This honour have all His saints. Hallelujah.

Then shall their former weakness of mortality be changed for the strength of immortality. Their

mouths shall praise Him unceasingly, Who hath set for them the thrones of judgment. The word of God shall be to them a sword keener, mightier than it had been before; and, as Israel fulfilled the decrees of God, written by the hand of Moses, and subdued the proud and mighty men of Canaan, so by it shall they conquer the unbelieving, and convince the gain-sayers, bringing the powers of the earth into the captivity of the grace of Christ, and binding the wise and great with the strong links of holy charity. So shall ever the saints of God avenge themselves of the world which thought not of them, by bringing its people, in penitence and faith, to the footstool of the Saviour's judgment-throne; and so shall they accomplish the eternal and unchangeable decrees of God. For of the Elect there are two bands and two orders: the first are they who shall rise the first, who shall live and reign with Christ, and shall sit on thrones with Him to judge the world; the second are they who shall be judged by Him, and who shall find mercy in the last great Day. 'Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.' Such honour have all His saints.

This Psalm, which is full of the rapture of holy joy and exultation, has no title in the Hebrew but that of "Hallelujah." It seems to express the triumph of the Church and of the elect in the last days, when Christ shall be manifested reigning over the world; and, being the last Psalm but one, it corresponds in a wonderful manner with the second Psalm, of the prophecy of which it celebrates the perfect

accomplishment. With verses 7—9, in a Jewish point of view, we must compare Deut. vii. and Josh. x.; but the key to the spiritual meaning of the Psalm is to be sought in Rev. xix., xx.

PSALM cl. *Laudate Dominum.*

1. O PRAISE God in His holiness : praise Him in the firmament of His power.

‘ And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia ; Salvation and glory and honour and power unto the Lord our God : for true and righteous are His judgments. And again they said, Alleluia.’ In heaven is praise made perfect ; there the saints of Christ no longer sing the Lord’s song in a strange land, but in their own all-glorious country. There they follow their Lord, and enter into that Holy of holies which Christ hath entered with His own blood, and into which He bringeth His redeemed—that sanctuary, uncreated and eternal, which is hallowed by the presence and the glory of God Himself, and which is filled for evermore with the seraphic cry, ‘ Holy, Holy, Holy.’ In that kingdom which is founded for ever above the firmament of heaven, the infinite holiness of the All-holy and the infinite power of the Almighty abide in changeless majesty, and are celebrated with changeless praise from eternity unto eternity.

2. Praise Him in His noble acts : praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

There shall His redeemed praise Him, for that all His enemies have been destroyed, for that love hath

triumphed over all sorrow and all sin, and for that death hath been swallowed up in immortality. They shall praise the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Who hath conquered and hath overcome, and hath sat down with His Father upon His throne.

3. Praise Him in the sound of the trumpet : praise Him upon the lute and harp.

They shall praise Him when the 'trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and they shall be changed.' They shall praise Him when shall be heard 'the voice of harpers harping with their harps, and the voice of them who sing, as it were, a new song before the throne, and before the four living things, and the elders : and no man can learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which are redeemed from the earth.'

4. Praise Him in the cymbals and dances : praise Him upon the strings and pipe.

They shall praise Him with their whole soul and spirit, with their whole heart and voice, with a body clothed with incorruption, and with a mouth hallowed with the Holy Ghost. There shall be praise without measure and without bound, for every thought shall be melody, and every movement praise.

5. Praise Him upon the well-tuned cymbals : praise Him upon the loud cymbals.

Above all, they shall praise Him Who loveth them with the unearthly utterings of love made

perfect. This is the music of those well-tuned and solemn-sounding cymbals which swell and complete the voice of praise: for if one could sing praises 'with the tongues of men and of angels, and had not charity, he would become as a mere tinkling cymbal.'

6. Let every thing that hath breath : praise the Lord.

Each one shall praise the Lord with all his spirit and his voice ; and yet each one shall feel himself unequal to sing the fulness of His mighty praise ; and shall therefore summon everything that hath breath, each created being which the Spirit of God hath formed and sanctified, to join in the immortal chant of praise. No tone of thankfulness, no note of melody shall be away : all powers, all faculties, all graces—all shall join. All who have ever lived and died and risen again, who were once created in the image and are now at last conformed unto the perfect likeness of the Son of God, through the love of Him Who ' was made a quickening Spirit,'—all the elect of Christ, saints, martyrs, virgins, confessors, shall change for ever, before the throne of God, the Hosannas of the Church on earth for the ceaseless Alleluias of eternity.

Heb. Hallelujah.

'And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as

it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice and give honour to Him : for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.'

This, the last of the five Hallelujah Psalms, which were probably used at the dedication of the second temple, concludes the Book of Psalms. It draws together, as it were, all the faith and hope, all the fears and prayers, all the thankfulness and joy of the Church, and sets it forth in one mighty Hallelujah, realizing the blessing the first Psalm opens with. It enumerates all the instruments used in the choral worship of the Jewish temple, typifying by them all the powers of our intellect and affections, and intimating the melody and joy of that true worshipping of God, the perfection of which will be found hereafter in the music and the praise of heaven. It is very fitting that the Psalms should end, as they do, with "Hallelujah."

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER, AND TO THE SON :
AND TO THE HOLY GHOST.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING, IS NOW, AND EVER
SHALL BE : WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN.

To the Church's bidding, 'Praise ye the Lord,' may our ready response ever be, 'The Lord's Name be praised.' May all our words and all our works, all our lives and all our hopes, ever be to the praise and glory of that most Blessed Trinity, Whose loving word in the beginning, 'Let Us make, Let Us redeem, Let Us sanctify,' is all our life, both temporal

and eternal. May what we say and what we do, who are regenerated in His most holy Name, ever add somewhat to that infinite glory with which heaven and earth—yea, even eternity itself, is full. Amen and Amen. So be it, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE END.

E R R A T A.

V O L. I.

Page 24, line 23, *for maketh, read makest.*

„ 188, lines 3 and 4: arrange these in parallels.

„ 282, line 10, *for thirty, read thirty-one.*

„ — „ 24, *for forty-first, read forty-second.*

„ 427, „ 3, *for the fear of God, read the Spirit of God.*

„ 457, „ 13, *add, To be used in the office for the Visitation of the Sick.*

V O L. II.

Page 245, line 11, *for fifty-three, read forty-three.*

„ 367, „ 2 from bottom, *for Gen. xxxviii. 15, read xxviii. 15.*

„ 419, „ 2 from bottom, *for unto read into.*

